

“Nothing about us, without us” – An assessment of public participation in the delivery of RDP houses in the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality

by

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Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Public Administration in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (School of Public Leadership) at Stellenbosch University



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March 2013

DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

E. Mphahlele

ABSTRACT

The pivotal role played by public participation in a social context is often undermined by change agents or administrators of government projects. The role of public participation is documented in Chapter 10 of the Constitution (South Africa, 1996). It states that “... people`s needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making”.

Besides the Constitution (South Africa, 1996) there are also other legislative frameworks that enshrine the right to public participation. Some of these provisions are included in the White Paper on Local Government (South Africa, 1998c), the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (South Africa, 1997b), the Integrated Development Plans, and others. It has to be acknowledged that public participation is the fundamental element for the success of development projects geared towards the social upliftment of poor communities.

Poor communities, by omission or commission, are often excluded from direct participation in social projects. This study was prompted by the lack of effective public participation in the RDP housing project in the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality, where the project was used as a case study. Qualitative research methods, well-founded theories and a literature study were used to inform the study. Forty-nine (49) respondents were interviewed.

By collecting and interpreting relevant data, the study was able to assess the extent of public participation that had taken place. The study then proceeded to make recommendations as to how the situation could have been handled and to formulate public participation model that would be context relevant to the area.

Unfortunately, the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality housing project is now a thing of the past and cannot be revisited. Fortunately, however, similar projects will be able to learn valuable lessons from this study in the future.

Ultimately, the research illustrated that a strategy of comprehensive public participation that includes all project beneficiaries has to be well planned and well managed to promote and ensure the successful implementation of the project.

OPSOMMING

Die rol wat deur publieke deelname gespeel moet word in die administrasie van regeringsprojekte word uiteengesit in Hoofstuk 10 van die Grondwet (Suid Afrika, 1996). Dit stipuleer da tdaar op mense se behoeftes gereageer moet word en dat die publiek aangemoedig moet word om deel te neem aan beleidsformulering.

Behalwe die Grondwet (Suid Afrika, 1996) is daar ook ander wetgewende raamwerke wat die reg op publieke deelname bevestig. Sommige van hierdie bepalings is ingesluit in die Witskrif op Plaaslike Regering (Suid Afrika, 1998c), die Witskrif op Transformasie van Openbare Dienslewering (Suid Afrika, 1997b), die Geïntegreerde Ontwikkelings planne, ensovoorts. Dit moet ook erken word dat publieke deelname die basis vorm vir die sukses van ontwikkelings projekte wat gerig is op die sosiale bemagtiging van ons gemeenskappe.

Openbare amptenare neem doelbewus nie altyd die belangrikheid van direkte deelname aan sosiale projekte in ag nie. Hierdie studie is juis aangespoor deur die afwesigheid van effektiewe publieke deelname in die HOP behuisings projekte in die Elias Motswaledi Munisipaliteit waar die Monsterlus HOP projek as 'n gevalle studie gebruik is. Die studie maak gebruik van 'n kwalitatiewe metode, gegronde teorie so wel as 'n literatuur studie. Onderhoude is onderneem en nege-en-veertig (49) onderhoude is gevoer.

Nadat die data versamel en geïnterpreteer is, het die studie die omvang van publieke deelname wat plaasgevind het geassesseer. Aanbevelings is gemaak oor hoe die owerhede die situasie beter kon hanteer het, en 'n publieke deelname model is geformuleer wat relevant tot die area is.

Die nadeel is dat die Elias Motswaledi behuisings projek afgehandel is en uiteraard nie teruggedraai kan word nie. Die voordeel is egter dat toekomstige projekte deur die studie bevoordeel kan word.

Die navorsing wys daarop dat publieke deelname strategieë wat alle rolspelers insluit, deeglik beplan en bestuur moet word, voor die aanvang van die projek sowel as gedurende die projek se implementering.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all those who value the poor as the beneficiaries of all development programmes and to those who acknowledge that rights go beyond social status. May the poor enjoy their rightful human rights space and drive the programmes designed to uplift them. Nothing is more pleasing than to see the poor smiling as a result of successful empowerment.

The poor have to be given an ear. Furthermore, they must enjoy resources, not leftovers, notwithstanding their status, and it is for poor people to determine their own status. I recognize all those who walk this journey of life with the poor. We must not let the poor walk in front of us, for we shall become abusive. Nor must we let the poor walk the journey behind us, for we may discard them. Rather, let us walk with them as fellow humans.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank God Almighty for the strength he gave to me to take on the challenge of this qualification. Secondly, I would like to thank the University of Stellenbosch for accepting me as their student. Thirdly, I would like to thank the academic staff, more especially Ms Junay Lange for being tireless in guiding me when I saw only darkness and for her infinite patience during trying times.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends for accommodating my continuous excuses when time did not allow me to be with them.

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The title “Nothing about us, without us” was deliberately chosen to undermine the notion that the public are passive recipients of services without them making decisions about what is suitable to their circumstances. It is untrue to think that the public is not able to decide what they want, the type and level of services they need and therefore they must not enjoy their right to make decisions on matters that impact on their lives.

This study focuses on the role and process of public participation as a prerequisite in the reconstruction and upgrading of RDP houses in the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality. This chapter outlines the background, the rationale and the problem statement of the study, followed by subsequent research questions and specified research objectives. It also gives a brief explanation of the qualitative research approach embarked upon in the study and concludes by giving the layout and structure of the rest of the document.

1.2 Background, rationale and problem statement

Generally, those involved in developmental debates (Oakley and Marsden, 1994; Davids *et al*, 2005; Dudley, 1993) seem to agree on the importance of public participation in the development process of poor communities where RDP houses are built. The belief that citizens should take part in decision-making processes on matters that impact on them is undisputed. However, even though public participation is a right that is protected in the Constitution (South Africa, 1996), it is not effectively practiced.

Despite the need for and the benefits derived from public participation in issues of community development, public participation is not always fully practised in promoting

good governance, yet it dominates public discourse when society questions the legitimacy of decisions.

Furthermore, despite the readily available literature (International Association for Public Participation, 2000; DSPGP, 2009) containing guidelines on how to practise public participation being available, it is of concern that public participation is still a problem to implement. Communities are seldom involved in the decision-making processes related to projects and are not given the opportunity and responsibility to manage their projects. This means that no sense of decision-making and ownership is instilled in communities. As a result, communities are deprived of the opportunity to craft their own developmental trajectory. The importance of public participation is usually underestimated or becomes an add-on in decision-making processes.

By contrast, the government could use meetings with the various communities as a strategy to ensure the acceptability of service delivery in, for example, housing projects. However, in most cases this strategy is not utilised. As a result, the communities feel left out and municipalities fail to take the initiative to rectify the situation.

The Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality is situated in the Limpopo Province under the oversight of the Sekhukhune District Municipality. Sekhukhune is one of the poorest rural regions in South Africa and job opportunities are extremely scarce. The result is that the people who are unemployed are not able to buy or build themselves decent homes. They are dependent on the government's housing projects. In addition, this means that if the government does not deliver houses and does not involve these poor people in the housing projects, there will be no progress in the community, while deterioration may well ensue.

This study focuses on a village in the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality, where the government initiated an RDP housing project that eventually ended in disaster. At the start of the project, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs together with the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality built RDP houses. However, the municipal officials did not discuss the project with the community in the affected ward. The officials

simply proceeded to choose a piece of land and start with the project. The ward councillor claims that he did not know about the project. Ward's organisations or community bodies such as cultural groups, business and traditional leaders, or anyone who might have had an interest in the project knew nothing about the RDP housing project.

As a result, the local people did not participate in determining the size, the locality and the structure of the houses. Furthermore, the contractor came from outside the community and he brought in his own workers, which meant that the local residents, the intended beneficiaries, were also not employed in the project. Understandably, the community felt left out and the people then protested. They even boycotted the houses, refusing to take occupation. Thus, the houses stood empty for a long time after they had been completed. Eventually, they were vandalised.

Thus it happened that poor people who could not afford to build or buy their own houses decided not to occupy the houses that were provided for them. They felt that the project had been imposed on them and that they had not participated in any stage of the project. This thesis aims to embark on research to identify solutions to problems such as that outlined above. It does so by investigating the development of mechanisms that can improve the participation of beneficiaries in RDP housing projects that are geared towards improving their livelihoods.

1.3 Research questions and objectives

Flowing from the discussion of the problem statement in the previous section, the question is "How can a poor person be reluctant to accept a free house?" The possibility is that this kind of situation can be averted by actively engaging the beneficiaries in RDP housing projects which are intended to benefit them. The primary research question, therefore, is: **How can the officials of the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality engage the residents to ensure authentic participation in RDP housing projects?** This can be broken down into the following secondary research questions:

1. What is public participation and how is it applied in democratic developmental settings
2. What are the national legislative policy provisions that emphasise public participation?
3. To what extent were all stakeholders included in the Elias Motswaledi RDP housing projects through public participation?
4. What are the RDP housing policies and legislative guidelines on how public participation should be practised?
5. What improvement mechanisms can be employed to promote public participation in Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality?

From the above research questions, the following research objectives were formulated:

1. Describe what public participation is.
2. Explore literature related to a conceptual and contextual understanding of various theoretical perspectives, roles, motivations and determinants of public participation in relation to national frameworks.
3. Provide an overview of public participation in relation to local government, focusing on policy and statutory provisions.
4. Explore RDP housing policies and legislative guidelines on how public participation is practiced.
5. Provide a synthesis pertaining to insights that have been brought to light through the study, by offering intended beneficiaries recommendations that would further the implementation of the citizens' decisions in the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality.

It is imperative to consider some views on the importance of public participation. Fagence (1977:22) commends participation in state affairs as a tool to curb political and social disturbances that often erupt in communities when people are denied an opportunity to be heard and take part in state affairs. There have been numerous civil protests as a result of peoples' unhappiness with service delivery, and this unhappiness can be attributed to a lack of public participation. Examples of service delivery protests are those experienced in

Balfour in Mpumalanga Province in 2009 and those in Lenasia South in the Gauteng Province.

It is important that governments provide space for public participation so that citizens can register their social queries and opinions. Governments should always provide participatory space and isolate themselves from positive community pressures. The Constitution (South Africa, 1996) gives people the right to complain when they feel dissatisfied with projects implemented by government.

There has, however, been a tendency to attach negative connotations to the poor who cannot uplift themselves socially. This has led to excluding the poor from participating at the broader societal level through influencing, directing, controlling and owning (Gwala and Theron, 2012) decisions that directly impact on their lives. Davids *et al.* (2005:10) state that “[s]ocial exclusion refers to the fact that, despite welfare and general wealth, there remains a group that is excluded from the mainstream benefits of the society and is prevented in some way from fully enjoying the general prosperity”.

Khoza (2010:5) contends that the utilisation of social mechanisms such as public participation in housing have been ignored to the detriment of poor beneficiaries, as they are typified as passive consumers who cannot take charge of their lives, but have to have decisions taken for them by others who possess political and economic power. The elite and powerful have failed to acknowledge that the use of mechanisms such as public participation in housing has often reinforced social coercion and solidarity, and eventually culminated into the improved quality of lives.

1.4 Clarification of concepts

In this study certain concepts that are used might not be familiar to other readers. It is therefore appropriate to clarify them for common understanding between the researcher and the reader. Otherwise, the researcher would be talking alone. Some of the concepts are clarified below.

- Public participation:** active steps taken by people in making decisions that have impact on them and the ability to influence the decision.
- RDP:** the abbreviation for the Reconstruction and Development Programme, which is a programme adopted by the ANC government to address socioeconomic inequities.
- RDP house:** houses built by the government for those who cannot afford to build/buy a houses for themselves as the result of poverty.

1.5 Research design and methodology

Mouton (2001) and Welman *et al* (2010) identify two broad designs, namely quantitative and qualitative research designs. The study has a qualitative research design as the data collected is more textual and less numerical, although during data analysis quantitative methods are used. A case study approach is adopted in the data collection stage because the researcher proceeds inductively and the study focuses on investigating the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality as an entity in its practice of public participation. The design is also empirical as new information is gathered by means of questionnaires (semi-structured questions) prepared beforehand (interview schedule) during face-to-face interviews. The information that is collected empirically is complemented by a literature study.

Both theoretical sampling and purposive sampling is used, because, during information gathering, only relevant research subjects, the beneficiaries, are the main subjects not the whole community. Purposive sampling is used for the interviewing of ward councillors, and municipal and provincial officials as they hold the valuable legislative frameworks guiding public participation in RDP housing.

During the data analysis stage, information is collected and categorised into themes. Thereafter a coding system is developed. More detailed information on the research design and methodology is provided in Chapter 4.

1.6 Summary and outline of chapters

The information collected was coordinated to form a logical sequence in the following manner:

Chapter one gives an overview of the study. It provides the rationale and statement of the problem. This is followed by research questions and specific objectives pertaining to the study. The core terminology used in the study and data collection methods are defined and explained. Finally, the section provides a chapter outline of what the entire thesis comprises.

Chapter two explores the literature available in order to conceptualise the challenges of public participation, and to assess the work already done by previous scholars with regard to the phenomenon of public participation. The chapter also explores several participation models and tries to suggest an acceptable, context-relevant model that can be applied to future RDP housing in the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality. The literature study is sub-categorised into themes of the study to make the information more user-friendly.

Chapter three provides an overview of the legislative framework developed nationally. This is achieved by reviewing policies and other legal provisions that try to provide participatory space within a democratic local municipal arena. The researcher followed a particular model: the researcher started with the Constitution (South Africa, 1996) followed by other supporting legislations like the Municipal Systems Act (South Africa, 2000), etc.

Chapter four outlines the research design and methodology.

Chapter five provides information on data collection and the recording thereof.

Chapter six provides the research findings and interpretation of data by means of comparisons and highlighting of relevant contributions from participants. The findings are stated thematically and integrated with the literature. The chapter, also, summarises the

study and develops guidelines to improve public participation in RDP housing projects. The chapter ends by citing references.

1.7 Summary

Public participation is a phenomenon that is rarely fully practised in providing services in South Africa, but particularly in providing RDP houses to communities. The South African government saw fit to provide RDP houses to impoverished communities in an attempt to address the problem of housing in South Africa. However, in many instances the authorities failed to implement the principle that the poor have to be allowed space to take part in decisions that impact on them.

This chapter outlines the background, rationale and problem statement of this study into implementing the practice of public participation especially in the provision of housing to poor communities. Research questions and broad research objectives are formulated, and an explanation of the use of a qualitative approach is given. In conclusion the chapter gives a picture of how the study is organised. The next chapter focuses on the literature study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature relevant to the topic of public participation is diverse and varied, and presents a variety of similar and different views on what public participation entails. This chapter focuses on the literature that deals with public participation as a social phenomenon in terms of its definition, principles and core values, involvement, objectives, factors that hinder the practice of public participation, causes underlying poor public participation, and the enhancement and conceptual clarification of public participation.

2.2 What is public participation? Seeking a definition

Public participation is a concept and a phenomenon that is differently defined by various scholars, and there is no single definition that is generally accepted by researchers and authors. This chapter gains an understanding of the concept by reviewing various sources that deal with the topic.

Social practitioners and stakeholders accept that members of the society should have the opportunity to be involved in decision-making, especially in matters that affect them. However, how to involve members of the public remains a complicated exercise. The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)(2000) and the DSPGP (2009) contend that the best principles of public participation are universally acknowledged and not contentious, and that the public participation process should be fair and competent. However, fairness and competence may not be the only features of a participatory process. Usually, the planners and participants do not agree about what constitutes a good participatory process. To put it differently, there may be no common definition of a good participatory process, either in context-specific or abstract forms.

Paul (1988:2) states: “The definition of ‘participation’ is a matter on which there is considerable disagreement among development scholars and practitioners. Some use the

term to mean active participation in political decision-making. For certain activist groups, participation has no meaning unless the people involved have significant control over the decisions concerning the organisation to which they belong. Development economists tend to define participation by the poor in terms of the equitable sharing of the benefits of projects. Yet others view participation as an instrument to enhance the efficiency of projects or as the co-production of services. Some would regard participation as an end in itself, whereas others see it as a means to achieve other goals.”

As a result, public participation means many things to many people. For an example, the government system in South Africa prior to 1994 was characterised by authoritarian paternalism. The Nationalist government usually unilaterally, without consultation, decided on how the majority should be governed and made choices for them. Public participation meant giving citizens an opportunity to comment only without letting their comments influence decisions, by, for instance, voting in a referendum or belonging to a particular civil society organisation. This is a narrow definition of public participation.

Since the adoption of South Africa's Constitution (South Africa, 1996), participation refers to a number of procedures that enable diverse members of the society to actively participate in matters regarding preferred choices and decision-making. However, the presence of the Constitution does not guarantee that things will not go wrong. As in the apartheid years, the danger might be citizen apathy, which has to be discouraged.

As a result of various narrow definitions, many development scholars (United Nations, 1986; Richardson, 1983:5; Schulenburg, 1998: 40, Brock, 2007:15) agree that the diverse meanings attached to public participation occur because public participation is context based. This stems from the fact that people's challenges are different and have to be approached differently. Nevertheless, the central focus has to be the desire to empower the disempowered communities.

Dauids *et al.* (2005:19) expand on this notion by stating that public participation as defined in development should revolve around people, their diverse needs, changing

circumstances, customs, values and knowledge. The ultimate objective is to eradicate poverty, discrimination and environmental degradation by fostering just relationships in and between poor and non-poor societies on a global scale. This shows that there is no one-size-fits-all when one talks about issues of development.

Furthermore, Theron (2008:102) states that when the principle of participation is used in the public domain, trendy slogans such as “the will of the people”, “voices from below” and “the common good” are heard from both the government and grassroots level. He further states that it is still not clear what is meant by this concept or how best to implement it (if it should be implemented at all) and that the concept has remained at a rather fuzzy and ideological level. In fact, he goes as far as saying that participation has degenerated into a kind of feel-good slogan coined to convince local audiences that local government has recognised the necessity of involving people in development activities. Davids *et al.* (2005:114) emphasise that “[p]ublic participation has become a buzzword, a ‘feel good’ concept, adding to a growing family of jargon. As with similar jargon, the indiscriminate use of the term ‘public participation’ to describe strategies that have little to do with authentic participation by the poor has created misunderstanding and blown-up expectations among the public, the so-called ‘beneficiaries’ or ‘stakeholders’ in development planning.

“We have experienced how lack of public participation has resulted in protests (Mchunu, 2012).”

Public participation as a social concept has also been used in the most misleading ways. Martin and Mathema (2010:129) state: “The word participation is one of the most abused in the English language – abused both deliberately and innocently... its central theme is the creative and meaningful involvement of users in decisions that affect them, and by users we include residents of informal settlements whose environment might be affected by development proposals, and all users of public services. Ultimately we are talking about how decisions are made, and by whom.” This definition is narrowly based on who is involved in the decision-making and the processes followed.

On the other hand, some scholars disagree with such a narrow definition as the above. Attaching the different meanings given above to public participation stems from seeing the concept as being broad and embracing many things within it, hence Davids *et al.* (2005:115) state that public participation as a concept cannot be packaged into a single statement. They argue that definitions should not serve as blueprints but should be dealt with as part of a social learning process, more so those which relate to grassroots interaction. This definition, too, is broadly articulated as it avoids being specific about the definition of what public participation really is.

This still leaves us without a clear definition. In contrast, Dudley (1993:7) defines public participation as a stimulant to individual and social beings. He understands it as a vehicle to carry out a political or physical task by bringing people together in order to lobby the state to provide services. He then puts it radically by saying that “[u]nity among the oppressed is a necessary prerequisite to liberation”. This definition is based on seeing public participation as a way of promoting social cohesion as opposed to a process or a broad concept that cannot be specified by using certain words. Public participation has to involve the poor and not exclude them. To emphasise the inclusion of the masses, Bekker (1996:40) defines public participation as an endeavour where the “common amateurs” of a community exercise power over decisions related to the general affairs of a community. He defines “common amateurs” as the “... people who have no paid office, wealth, special information or any other formal power source beyond their own number”. This definition goes further to clarify that these people have no power, but their power is gained by participating in the decision-making process itself. Participation would be genuine only when people who were previously denied participation are now actively participating in conjunction with previously advantaged citizens and able to influence, direct, control and own the process in which they participate. The reality is that true participation can be realised only when status is not attached to the concept. This is a pro-poor sympathetic approach. The fact of the matter is that the poor are frequently undermined when coming to societal matters.

On the other hand, Theron (2008:110) states: “It should be stressed that participants in the development process should be allowed to define and/or create their own view of their social, political, economic and other environments and of the strategies that should be used to address the problems of such environments. This also relates to the public’s input in formulating participation strategies as well as during the course of the implementation process and monitoring.” The reality is that in South Africa, the decisions are taken somewhere by the politicians without seeking views from the public, let alone the poor people.

Dauids *et al.* (2005:114) mention seven core values of public participation. They are:

1. The people should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public’s contribution will influence the decision.
3. The public participation process communicates the interest and meets the process needs of all participants.
4. The public participation process seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected.
5. The public participation process involves participants in defining how they participate.
6. The public participation process communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.
7. The public participation process provides participants with information they need to participate in a meaningful way.

The above core value depict that public participation is people-centered. It is a process that looks after the interests of participants and not of the change-agents. Furthermore, these core values are internationally based as they resemble the principles promoted by international bodies like IAP2.

In promoting meaningful input, Midgely (1986:10) states that “... participation requires the direct face-to-face involvement of citizens in social development and ultimate control over

decisions that affect their own welfare. Since participation must involve the whole community, the disadvantaged must be empowered to take an active part.” Thus public participation can be said to be based on dialogue that is characterized by social inclusivity. When people feel included in a social discourse, they become aware of internal human growth, as Burkey (1993:56) points out: “Public participation is an essential part of human growth- that is the development of self-confidence, pride, initiative, responsibility, cooperation. Without such development within the people themselves, all efforts to alleviate their poverty will be immensely more difficult if not impossible.” Burkey further mentions what he calls the “self-reliant participatory development approach”. He defines this principle as “... an educational and empowering process in which people, in partnership with each other and with those able to assist them, identify problems and needs, mobilise resources, and assume responsibility themselves to plan, manage, control and assess the individual and collective actions that they themselves decide upon.”

In addition to the above, Bryant and White (1982:25) view participation as a social activity based on openness to the perceptions and feelings of others; it is an awareness of what others can bring to the activity. The strategies for eliciting participation are a means and not an end. Even though there is no standardised definition of public participation, there are guiding principles that are widely acknowledged. From the above, the common and underlying concept in all the definitions is the inclusion of a people-centered approach. This people-centered approach should be based on some core values. Some of these are discussed in the next few sections.

2.3 Implementation of public participation

Finally, Gwala and Theron (2012:5) give clarity on how authentic public participation is to be implemented. Their analysis is based on the IAP2 Toolbox. They state that public participation is made of three levels, which cover 59 strategies. Level 1 covers informing strategies, level 2 covers consulting strategies and level 3 covers empowering strategies. For authentic public participation to take place, the public participation facilitator has to plan the process in advance, the facilitator has to acquaint himself or herself with the type or nature of participation needed, assess the particular immediate context in which

participation has to take place, be aware and identify group or individual contributions of beneficiaries and finally through the establishment of mutual relationship between him or her as a representative government and beneficiaries plan the best viable strategies and finally test the relevance of chosen strategies against the three levels of public participation.

Furthermore, it is often easy to think that public participation is equivalent to one of the three levels of public participation mentioned in the preceding paragraph. For example, strategies which only inform beneficiaries like briefings, expert panels, flyers, newspaper insert and radio announcements do not preclude authentic public participation. On the other hand, strategies which only consult beneficiaries, for example feedback registers, interviews and surveys do not amount to authentic public participation. Authentic public participation has to reach a level where after the process, the beneficiaries feel empowered. Strategies at this level include participatory action research, public hearings, direct dialogues and influential contributions from intended beneficiaries.

A well known strategy is the use of community meetings. The strategy is usually deemed to be an easy exercise, forgetting that it needs a careful planning. If community meetings are not well planned for, chaos might erupt to the regret of the facilitator. The importance of planning is emphasised by Gwala (2011:149) when he states that there has to be a proper plan so as to achieve the desirable goals that culminate in empowerment.

In addition, Gwala (2011:149) suggests that for community meetings to be an empowering exercise, they have to involve all available and interested parties, careful planning in terms of place, time and date, appropriate and relevant media to popularise the event in time, proper understanding of goals and proper planning of logistics. Contrary to the preceding advice given in the preceding paragraph, it is often rare that the above suggestions are considered. There is no appropriate media choice made and mostly, the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality uses only radio announcements and in only one language (Sepedi), forgetting South Africa language variation.

Again, only level 1 strategy is used, disregarding other strategies in the remaining two levels. Adopting shortcut versions of public participation does not lead to empowerment but haphazard self-fulfillment by facilitators. It denies beneficiaries of their right to decision-making and this tendency is widely seen in most communities.

2.4 Core values underlying public participation

As noted in the first paragraphs of the literature study, there is confusion in South Africa regarding public participation. This confusion stems from lack of a widely accepted definition of public participation, involvement and consultation. Moreover, the techniques and strategies used to practice public participation differ across authors, municipalities, communities and policy implementers. It is in this regard that we can assume that South Africa is like other countries which found themselves faced with a new challenge of decentralising democracy through public participation entails. The practical usage of the IAP2 core values is discussed in the remaining paragraphs of this section.

Reflecting back in the literature study, we have seen how individual authors define public participation as they deem suitable to their various contexts. If there was clarity in the concept, public participation, most citizens would have been benefitting from social projects intended for beneficiaries. To rescue us from the lack of clarity and indecisiveness on what public participation entails, IAP2 developed seven core values that can rescue us from the lack of understanding of what public participation is.

Our discussion starts by looking at the concept, consultation. In South Africa, most local municipalities use consultation as a replacement to public participation because of lacking to differentiate between the two concepts. Consultation is a limited form of public participation because the change agent dominates the process by defining and giving solutions to the social problem. In consultation, the intended beneficiaries do not share in decision-making. Authentic public participation should not make the change agent replace the participants' views. Consultation is regarded as the weakest form of public participation by IAP2 standards.

In addition, the same as consultation, involvement is regarded by IAP2 as the weakest form of participation. In involvement, the public is not taking decisions and influence them. The public rather co-opted, placated and manipulated. Such practices contribute towards public distrust. Beneficiaries have to be active citizens in decision-making and this should preclude that all the participants will have a say in all matters pertaining to decision-making.

However, having given a view on the state of South Africa on public participation in the above two paragraphs, that does not mean participation can be confined to collaboration as per IAP2. Our discussion starts by looking at the concept, consultation. In South Africa, most local municipalities use consultation as a replacement to public participation because of lacking to differentiate between the two concepts. Consultation is a limited form of public participation.

In South Africa, at the local government level, projects that impact on citizens' lives are not controlled by locals. Control as per IAP2 definition means empowering of citizens and this is not always true in South Africa. In South Africa, development is almost in the control of the governing party. An example is the Local Economic Development (South Africa, 2005) programmes that are not controlled locally but by national government.

In South Africa, there is a general consensus that citizens must have a contribution in decision-making when their lives are going to be affected. The contribution to decision-making should be heard at local government level because it is where basic service delivery takes place. However, contribution as per IAP2 standards is always done at the level of consultation and informing. Informing and consultation do not satisfy the demands of IAP2 core value number 1, which demands that 'those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in decision-making process. Mere informing and consulting of beneficiaries do not make them feel the ownership of the whole process of public participation.

Core Value 2 is based on 'the promise that beneficiaries' contributions influence the decisions.' Influencing of decisions is always a contested terrain between beneficiaries and

change agents. There is no possibility of influencing decisions when beneficiaries are denied the opportunity to contribute in the development and implementation of projects. The lack of space to contribute ideas is one of the causes of violent protests caused by public frustration.

Core Value 3 is based on the demand that 'participation has to yield sustainable decisions that recognise and communicate participants' and decision makers' interests.' Unfortunately, communication between change agents and beneficiaries is often top-down or one-way. Change agents, usually, are the ones who do preliminary planning on what beneficiaries need. This is because the change agents think they know what the community needs.

Core Value 4 demands that 'participation should facilitate the involvement of those who have the potential of being affected by or interested in a decision.' Looking at the strategies of consultation and involvement, they do not contribute towards real participation because often beneficiaries do not plan and implement the participation process themselves.'

Core Value 5 demands that 'participants, themselves, have to design how they want to participate. This is a contentious activity in South Africa. Change agents fail to acknowledge that people will only participate when they think the process of participation is of benefit to them. Often, the public perceive public participation process as a window dressing and top-down exercise. No one will participate if he or she feels their needs do not matter to anyone.

Core Values 6 and 7, respectively, demand that 'public participation provides participants with the information they need' and that 'the public participation process communicates how the participants themselves influenced the decision-making.' Neither of the two core values are addressed in almost all public participation activities and projects because seldom participants are given feedback.

In sum, South Africa is still a developing country whereby the IAP2 values are still. Our discussion starts by looking at the concept, consultation. In South Africa, most local municipalities use consultation as a replacement to public participation because of lacking to differentiate between the two concepts. Consultation is a limited form of public participation.

In a South African context, public participation will remain idealistic and abstract. Fortunately, we have to appreciate that these ideal are admired by the majority of the citizens. It is of utmost importance and would be appreciated if the change agents are educated and capacitated in understanding the benefits that can be derived from authentic implementation of public participation processes. The capacitating of change agents is usually not fulfilled because policy makers are not willing to democratize local governments.

2.5 Objectives of public participation

The process of public participation should be undertaken with particular objectives in mind, with the aim of realising particular advantages. There are various advantages to be gained if public participation is practised in a meaningful manner. To see to it that public participation is practiced at local levels, the Department of Public Service and Administration produced a draft (South Africa, 2007) on public participation.

The draft encourages all three tiers of governance to commit themselves to a culture of governance that is formally encourages a system of participatory governance. The departments are encouraged to develop appropriate mechanisms and procedures which will enable the local citizens to participate in the affairs of their departments. The empowering provisions of this paragraph are seldom realised in the South African context. The DPSA draft policy needs all departments to draft Public Participatory Policies that will allow both employees of the departments and the public to participate in the affairs of the departments. The policies must clarify the roles and responsibilities of all role players and all interested parties. In the South Africa's context, these empowering statements are not true since the ruling party discourages criticism by the public.

Also, it is stated in the draft that departments have to invite comments. Unfortunately, most officials enjoy listening to what they want to hear, not what they need to hear. When people know that their views will not be listened to or welcomed, they will not have the reason to participate.

Public participation has to be a process by which the values, needs and concerns of the citizens are incorporated into governmental decision-making. It has to be a process whereby the people articulate what is important to their lives. Desai (1995:47) describe participation as a grass-roots democracy that develops and increases local self-reliance. When the authorities work hand-in-hand with the people, better project results and better housing conditions can be achieved through participation because the local people know what they need, what they want and what they can afford. This approach enhances the making of political capital and helps projects to remain operative on their own even after the project agencies withdraw.

In addition, Garcia-Zamor (1985:6) maintains that participation promotes integration and increases performance. It ensures sensitivity and promotes the effective response to the local community's feelings, needs and problems. It also results in higher and better quality outputs by promoting a more economical operation through a greater use of local human resources. This approach is feasible if participants have accurate information on how to participate in the process, and if they, via their participation, as ideal, can influence, direct, control and own the process.

Public participation should aim to enhance the ability of citizens to live their lives in a fulfilling manner by collectively addressing the shortcomings of their living conditions and any other problems. In his work, Paul (1988:3) identifies capacitating, promotion of effectiveness, cost sharing and efficiency to be the objectives of public participation. He states that public participation has to promote equal sharing of power by all members of the community regardless of their social status. When people are actively involved in

projects themselves, they participate based on the responsibilities given to them. By giving beneficiaries responsibilities, they become capacitated with the skills and knowledge needed to operate the projects and in which project goals are attained. The question that arises is whether the project really tries to achieve the social objectives that are intended. When beneficiaries participate, clear and relevant social or community goals can be designed and put into practice and planning partnerships between public participation facilitators and the local, intended beneficiaries constructed.

In order for a project to be successful resources must be available. These resources come in the form of money, labour and equipment. It has been found that successful projects use immediate resources, and community participation means that its members will contribute towards the project initiation and completion. In local municipalities where most basic services are delivered directly to locals, beneficiaries are not used as resources in the implementation of projects. This coincides with the problem statement in chapter one of this study. In the problem statement it is mentioned that the contractor did not involve the local people in the building of the houses and this clashes with the objectives of Expanded Public Works Programme (South Africa, 2003) and the Local Economic Development Strategy (South Africa, 2005).

It must also be remembered that there has to be relationship between inputs and outputs. Public participation promotes better rapport between all stakeholders, with a balance between input and outcome, and a climate in which unnecessary delays are averted.

Public participation promotes government responsiveness (Municipal Systems Act, 1994). The underlying premise is that public participation can enhance the government's performance by enabling it to be more responsive and more accountable. The increased dialogue and consultation between the public and the authorities ensure that the local needs and social demands are heard. Those wielding power have to receive feedback on the effectiveness of their decisions in order to enhance responsiveness. Greater public participation generally culminates in greater public scrutiny of services as the citizens, themselves, become participants in the monitoring and assessment of government

performance. Public participation encourages government–citizen interaction and this exposes the government to continuous scrutiny.

Creighton (2005:18) states that public participation tries to achieve an improved quality of decision-making because each participant gains a good understanding of the issue and how his/her co-participants view it. Participants share in experiences, facts, ideas, hopes and knowledge. They grab the opportunity of communicating their interests and also listen to the needs of others. The decisions taken are evaluated from different angles, and this helps to achieve consensus so that implementing decisions becomes easier with fewer confrontations. The result is the minimising of delays and acceptance of credibility and legitimacy of the decision implementers.

Ideally, all stakeholders should be involved in communication and dialogue in order to enhance public participation. Public participation is an endeavour to bring together all stakeholders in order to take decisions about matters that affect their lives. The poor, as beneficiaries in any project or programme, have to initiate dialogue on any matter that would have an effect on their lives. Multi-stakeholder processes have to be initiated as part of the public participation process.

Garcia-Zamor (1985:36) gives a slightly different view. He states that “... popular participation is a part of the rules, behaviors, structures, and processes, formal and informal, that the external environment of the administrative system assigns to its internal environment instrumentally so as to enhance the likelihood of the system performing and achieving the policy goals”.

In sum, public participation helps with the administration of government programmes. Governments, however, deal with the involvement of the public in the administration of their programmes in various ways. They sometimes employ decentralisation, or they invite citizens to assist in the implementation and administration of programmes, or they invite their citizens to scrutinise and monitor the day-to-day operations of the state. Ultimately, however, participation, like any other social process, has its own challenges or factors that can hinder it.

2.6 Common causes underlying poor participation

Van den Dool (2005:11) states: "... the decision-maker has a mission based on the will of the people. Elected representatives transmit the will of the people to the bureaucracy without any problem. Consequently the bureaucrat defines the problem; he (very rarely she) develops alternative solutions and appraises the costs, risks and outcomes. Finally, he is trained. The importance of participation, by the people concerned in this entire process, is totally neglected."

Theron (2008:221) expresses a similar view: "The outsider delivery manner of development is controversial. Besides its blue-print, top-down, perspective, system-maintaining and mechanistic approach, it remains arrogant and insulting to its beneficiaries."

Public participation should not be an oppressive process that increases the social gap between humans. It has to be a "binding factor" that brings people together. To further the notion of relationship building, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat stated in its report (2008:4) that "... forms of democracy – especially institutional details of how people actually participate in national decision-making -- have a strong bearing on the relationship between democracy and development".

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) also cites factors that can hinder participation from the beneficiaries' perspective. Most of these factors revolve around culture. For example, some cultures do not allow women to present their ideas in the presence of men, nor are women allowed to stand up in the presence of men and discuss social issues. This leads to women lacking the confidence to contest ideas formulated by the men, but which do not suit the women. Culture can instill fear, insecurity, low self-esteem and a feeling of inferiority in women because men are perceived to be their superiors. This fuels an inability in women to develop the strength to take positive and self-affirming risks, as they fear criticism for their actions which may be perceived as overstepping customary roles. These cultural practices deter participation by women as it is viewed as a social

taboo for women to compete with men on social platforms. As a result women feel powerless. Their perception is that by virtue of being women, they do not have the power through their voices to effect meaningful change in society.

Desai (1995:48) states: "... in practice community participation is rarely an outright success...states responses to community participation... have often been haphazard and poorly formulated, and there are substantial variations in the extent to which those ideals have been applied in different countries...depending on the preferences of senior administrators, politicians, and planners."

Public participation also fails to occur where the narrow interests of a few gain priority. Notably, service delivery has the drawback of being able to be used in a biased and narrowly defined manner. It can be used by interest groups to achieve their narrow interests, which, in most cases, do not address the interests of the larger community. This leads to clashes in the society or community. Gildenhuys (in Bekker 1996:2) posits that local government policies usually do not represent the interests of the majority. He maintains that it serves no purpose to imply that local government is responsive to its citizens' needs while in reality only the concerns of the minority are the ones addressed. It is also true that owing to the high level of illiteracy among the black majority, they are usually marginalised and not considered when community issues are addressed.

Generally, however, there are a variety of factors that lead to low levels of public participation. Bekker (1996:71) alludes to the fact that often public participation exercises do not in reality contribute to high levels of participation. It is a fact that public participation is not given the importance it deserves, but is mostly used as a legalistic compliance mechanism by government administrators and politicians. In addition, Bekker (1996:71) states that historical factors, unethical tendencies, the creation of unrealistic expectations, ignorance, civic apathy and the lack of accountability and transparency all contribute to reduced levels of participation by the public. The Municipal IQ Protest Monitor (2012), in addition, states that officials who do not attend community meetings ofr

attend but not act on what the people have raised contribute towards lack of trust in the public participation process.

Historically, the right of people to participate in governance issues cannot be divorced from the past political landscape in South Africa. Pre-1994, the majority of the people were not allowed to take part in matters that directly affected them in their respective localities. This implies that the majority were not aware of the role they had to play in service delivery matters in their own municipalities. Questioning of the level and quality of service delivery was unknown to black communities, and the part they played was only in protests and in paying for the low quality of service delivery they received. At present, according to Ngamlana (2012:2), one of the challenges South Africa is facing is the silencing of critical voices within society. Ngamlana states “Emasculating SANCO and other critical voices in society has left fewer spaces through which people can voice their concerns and channel them to government.” He mentions that the reasons for protests, among others, include unfulfilled promises, dissatisfaction with service delivery, voice of the people not heard, deployment of unqualified ANC comrades, corruption and nepotism in local government and lack of critical voice representing civil society.

As stated above, public participation in South Africa cannot be divorced from the country’s historical past. While white South Africans had the opportunity to elect their representatives from their own constituencies, their black counterparts were denied the opportunity to exercise that right. Although black municipalities were introduced in 1980, they lacked political legitimacy. At the same time, the Indian and coloured people were given the opportunity to establish their own municipalities by being allowed to establish management and local affairs committees. However, the challenge here was that these committees were not allocated enough funds to run their affairs. Inequity and segregation were the core principles in the running of local governments. The White Paper on Local Government (South Africa, 1998) states that apartheid developed and promoted residential segregation and forced the removal of black residents to municipalities that were poor. This led to the displacement of black residents, who were denied their legitimate right to play a role through public participation in their local municipalities.

The present political situation is better than the past apartheid era because is based on human rights and transformation of service delivery. The problem is that we have more protests than in the past. The Municipal IQ Protest Monitor (29 March, 2012) stated that South African Local Government Association called for insurance to cover the municipal councilors' properties. Critics to this call argue that councilors should have been safe if they engaged communities in their daily community activities.

Furthermore, the Municipal IQ Protest Monitor reports that it is not only councilors who are at risk, also municipal officials are victimised and intimidated. The incidents are not isolated as most councilors and municipal officials across the country had their homes, cars and even members of their families threatened. The report states that between 2004 and 2011, 69% of the protests were violent. It mentioned two explanations for this. Firstly, there is an opportunistic criminal element that can be detected when protestors do not state clear demands. The report, however, states that this explanation is relatively small as most protests have a clear basis. Secondly, protests are sparked by officials that fail to respond to peoples' demands by always giving empty promises. Communities need to see action.

In finality, the report states that arresting residents during protest does not solve problems. The solution is to let people take charge of the way they engage local government. It is true that communities should not be kept in the dark and susceptible to rumours. Marginalised communities should be involved.

It is a fact that every five years sees South Africa hold national and local polls. Politicians contest elections and promise their electorates better service delivery. However, it is also a fact that the expectations raised among the residents remain unrealised. In turn, the residents become suspicious of councillors and politicians wanting only to serve their narrow self-interests at the residents' expense, leading to protests (Mchunu, 2012).

In addition, ignorance and civic apathy contribute to low levels of public participation. The public does not have enough knowledge to participate actively and meaningfully in local

government. Councillors and government officials lack the will to educate residents in the processes of participation and may even enjoy thriving on the ignorance shown by residents. Clapper (in Bekker 1996:74) states that it is important to establish whether the public is competent enough to participate in planning in order to influence decisions that have direct impact on them. The truth is that there is a void between councillors and their constituencies because the councillors chose to leave communities where there is poor service delivery and live in suburbs where services are good. Furthermore, local government procedures and regulations are written in complex language that is not easy to interpret or user-friendly to lay citizens. Desai (1995:48) identified the following problem in the implementation of participation in projects: Most countries lack experience in implementing participatory processes. This problem is evidenced in the lack of “suitable personnel”.

The result is that the poor are usually left out of participatory processes, especially at the design stage. This leads to top-down management, which, in turn, makes the public reluctant to their services to the community, for example, by serving on the local council. Nor do the authorities understand when citizens default in payments for poor services. To that effect Davids *et al.* (2005:125) state that “[c]entralised, top-down and prescriptive obstacles are part of the political system and are at variance with grassroots, bottom-up public participation. Administrative structures are often control orientated and follow rigid, blueprint-style guidelines. Such structures do not allow room for public input into or control over the process.”

Furthermore, Davids *et al.* (2005:113) maintain that “[y]ear after year we observe how change agents and policy makers struggle to meet the challenge to relate public participation ideals to tangible strategies. We see frustrated and disillusioned beneficiaries going to the streets to protest...” These protests result from the inability to clarify what constitutes public participation in terms of who should participate in decision-making and what public participation entails. Often challenges emerge owing to the lack of decision-making on the level at which public engagements and interventions have to be consolidated. In addition, it is difficult to identify who is in charge of the public

participation process because of the need to include people with “indigenous knowledge” relevant to public participation. These are the results of the apartheid dispensation that denied citizens an orientation to participate in decision-making on matters that have a direct impact on them.

Garcia-Zamor (1985:8) mentions four major obstacles that can surface if participation is not well managed. These are group dominance, lack of interest to participate, insufficient time and structural restrictions. When other groups feel dominated, they eventually lose interest in participating. Most of the time, the poor, who are mostly illiterate, are dominated and do not understand why they have to participate. This group should also be invited and be shown how to engage in discussions. An authentic participatory approach often needs educational campaigns to gain the confidence of the local people. Unfortunately, this is a time-consuming exercise that can warrant the overextension of project deadlines.

Finally, restrictions are generated by the present structures and systems whereby government officials usually feel threatened by participatory processes or decentralisation trends.

In conclusion, Garcia-Zamor (1985:10) summarises by stating that “... in certain cases, it may be that any increased involvement of local community residents in development projects may hurt the vested local interests of those who dominate the existing local socio-politico-economic structures”.

2.7 Low-cost housing

In this study, the second variable is low-cost housing. After a scrutiny of what public participation is and how it can be implemented, we have to assess it in terms of how it contributes to the successful delivery of low-cost housing projects.

According to Statistics South Africa (South Africa, 2012) second quarter release, South Africa has a high number of people (24, 9%) who are unemployed. Unemployed people are

not able to build themselves decent houses. Furthermore, one of the socioeconomic imbalances created by apartheid was housing. The magnitude of the housing problem stated by A New Housing Policy and Strategy (South Africa, 1994) derives from, among others, complicated bureaucracy, and financial and institutional, and administrative frameworks. To address the challenge of this housing backlog, the government developed an RDP programme. One of the programme's aims is to provide low-cost housing. For the first time South Africa had a comprehensive low-cost housing policy framework developed for all citizens. The programme was developed to create an enabling environment for local and provincial governments to fulfill their constitutional mandate of providing low-cost housing. Building of low cost houses is a development programme that has to be people-centered. The beneficiaries have the right as per Constitution (South Africa, 1996) to actively take part in those programmes. Usually beneficiaries are perceived as passive receivers of services and this is democratically and constitutionally unacceptable.

In addition to other policies, the White Paper on Housing (RSA, 1994) has played an important role in creating the necessary conditions for national consensus in housing. This consensus together with a spirit of public participation encourages people to harness the skills, the resources and energy the nation needs to accomplish the task at hand. Also, the New Housing Policy and Strategy (South Africa, 1994) states that the housing programmes have to be designed in order to unleash the energy not only to get the houses onto the ground but also to give meaning to the notion of people-centered development. No programme is people centered when the beneficiaries' skills are ignored. This makes the beneficiaries to regard themselves as onlookers or spectators in the affairs of their own. This discourages a feeling of ownership of the project by the intended beneficiaries.

Furthermore, the New Housing Policy and Strategy (South Africa, 1994) states that the government should be committed to a developmental programme that is propelled from inside communities. The strategy encourages and supports initiatives that emerge from communities or wider local social entities and which aim to equip and empower citizens to drive their own economic empowerment and physical environment development and to satisfy their own basic needs. In order to realise the functionality of the people-centered

approach in the low-cost housing programme, the New Housing Policy and Strategy (South Africa, 1994) states that “ [i]n order to convert these laudable sentiments into reality, government will be required to actively provide support for the process”. It seems the Elias Motswaledi Municipality officials misinterpreted or ignored the contents of the New Housing Policy and Strategy. To support a process is not to dominate it. It simply means to direct and advise.

Khan and Ambert (2003:v) say that, historically, South Africa`s housing process is characterised by the disadvantaged groups being deprived of housing and property rights, which culminated into rental and service boycotts by citizens which challenged the political legitimacy of the government. They contend that the current housing policy is influenced by the pre-1994 era as the policy was proposed during the times of National Housing Forum negotiations which came with the National Housing Code (NHC). The NHC (South Africa, 2000) identifies the following as key characteristics of the South African housing market: lack of affordability, fragmented housing policy and administration systems, lack of capacity, insufficient land, special needs for women, et cetera.

South African`s housing shortage, then, is the aftermath of the apartheid regime`s policy which provided housing along racial lines. This led to a large number of South Africans living in informal settlements or being allocated unacceptable housing. This has been aggravated by unhealthy living conditions. To rectify the situation, developmental local government drew up the Housing Act (South Africa, 1997) which promotes the creation of livable integrated dwellings connected to cities, towns and rural areas. The Makhuduthamaga Municipality have a spatial plan that was honored by making sure that the houses were not built in isolated areas. The accessibility of facilities needed by the beneficiaries is easy as compared to Elias Motswaledi housing project where the houses are built in an isolated area far from basic facilities like schools and clinics.

Prior to that, the Development Facilitation Act (South Africa, 1995) was promulgated to address the crisis by introducing measures and guidelines that expedited the implementation of social programmes that focus on land availability and housing delivery.

The Housing Act has been instrumental in speeding up low-cost housing delivery. According to the Act, municipalities have to build houses that are habitable, stable and sustainable. In this regard, the Makhuduthamaga had a few houses that were of poor workmanship. Fortunately, those mistakes were instantly rectified because the officials were always doing site visits.

Like the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality, the Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality also embarked on a low-cost housing project. The Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality shares a boundary with the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality. Both municipalities fall under the same district namely, the Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality. The Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality is, however, socioeconomically in a better position than the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality. It has a shopping mall, a busy taxi-rank and a hospital. The local people, even though they experience poverty, are able to help themselves by engaging in informal business and gaining employment from the local businesses.

Owing to its socioeconomic conditions – the lack of housing development in the area and the rapid population growth as a result of the economic activity in the community – the Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality initiated a low-cost housing programme. The beneficiaries of the project were from the local community. The municipality employed a fair degree of expertise in all aspects of the project. It involved the beneficiaries in the construction and development of the project. Local labour was found to be of greater value than initially anticipated as it became clear that it was unnecessary to import skills from outside. The authorities then realised that local knowledge should never be underestimated and undermined. Representatives were nominated by the beneficiaries. In addition, there were systematic consultations. The local community participated in choosing the location of the project, the use of local labour, the design and structure of the houses without increasing the budget allocation, and the use of local businesses to supply the building materials. There were regular public meetings, as well as one-on-one meetings between government officials and the beneficiaries. Pamphlets were used to invite people to meetings and inform them about the project progress.

Importantly, the beneficiaries were involved in the assessment of the houses. This was possible as the beneficiaries were allocated house numbers before the building of the houses commenced. Every beneficiary was encouraged to assess the workmanship of their houses frequently in order to help make a thorough assessment of the project.

2.8 Summary

From the literature study, it was discovered that various authors define public participation using different words and attach individual meanings to public participation. This depends on the perspective from which the scholars stand in their various social contexts. Based on overlaps, common principles and values identified in the literature study, public participation can be defined by encompassing positive attributes attached to it. Public participation can be defined as a process whereby the public that is directly or indirectly affected by a decision or particular interest in a decision is actively and meaningfully exercising their right to be involved in decision-making and finally influence the decision.

Again, the literature study shows that governments exist to deliver quality services to communities. Therefore, service delivery is an important issue in communities. Therefore, the government, particularly the local government tier, should play a critical role in making sure that service delivery is improved. In order to improve service delivery, 'public participation has to be prioritised.

Public participation seems to be a challenge to be effectively implemented. Thanks to the various scholars and international bodies which contributed towards sharing information on how public participation process can be approached. The next chapter will deal specifically with the legal framework governing public participation.

CHAPTER 3

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on conceptualising public participation by exploring various definitions and typologies of public participation, principles and practices of participation, and the stumbling blocks in terms of the implementation of successful participation. It also gave an example of public participation in a low-cost housing project.

In a democratic country, democracy is reflected in the Constitution and the accompanying legislative frameworks. To assess the level of democracy with regard to public participation, this chapter reflects on legal frameworks that protect democratic rights and responsibilities related to participation.

3.2 The South African Constitution (South Africa, 1996)

A government that is effective is the one that represents the people's interests. This type of government is characterised by accountability and transparency and its willingness to meet the interests of its citizens. The willingness to meet peoples' interest is reflected in the type of policies or legal frameworks that government develops. In South Africa, the supreme law is the Constitution (South Africa, 1996) which is backed by other supporting Acts.

The important part played by public participation is clearly stated in Chapter 10 of the Constitution (South Africa, 1996) where it states that "... people's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making". The Constitution (South Africa, 1996) is the supreme law upon which all the laws of the country are based. It recognises local government and considers it a distinctive sphere of government that can promote public participation. The Constitution (South Africa, 1996) states that local government is mandated to "give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote the social and economic development of the community; and participate in

national and provincial development programmes". The Constitution further encourages "the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government".

The coming into effect of the Local Government White Paper (South Africa, 1998) validated the provisions of the Constitution (South Africa, 1996) and RDP objectives on how local government should function. The document clearly states that development in government is a core focus for local government and that the local government must work in collaboration with local communities to improve the economic and social conditions in their areas of jurisdiction. Local government has to take a leadership role by involving residents and stakeholder groups in the development process in order to build social capital and generate a sense of common purpose and destiny for addressing social challenges.

Furthermore, the Constitution (South Africa, 1996) empowers the citizens to influence the decisions taken on their behalf by means of petitions. The Constitution (South Africa, 1996) states the following: "Section 56(d) and 69(d) of the Constitution provides for the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces to receive petitions, representations from any interested persons or institutions."

As a result, the Constitution (South Africa, 1996) encourages persons, as individuals or groups, to participate in law making and oversight. The South African Parliament has instituted several ways of opening spaces to promote public involvement in the work of the Parliament. The writing of petitions is one of exercising participatory democracy. One obstacle is the public's lack of knowledge on how to write petitions and what procedures to follow in the whole process.

In a nutshell, in a democratic South Africa citizens have the legal right to participate in the activities and the affairs of local government. Moreover, if a project is to be effected in the locality of such specific citizens, they should be involved from the planning to the implementation, including the evaluation of the projects. This is a way of widening the

ownership mindset. In the RDP housing project, for example, the people were supposed to have been given the chance to register their opinions and fully take the ownership of the housing project.

The fundamental basis for all legislation in the Republic of South Africa is the national Constitution (1996). The South African Constitution (1996) promotes public participation for a sustainable democracy and effective service delivery. This endeavour by the Constitution tries to provide empowering legislative provision in terms of the policy-making process and its implementation. Although the Constitution provides for these rights, the question is whether the opportunities provided or contained in the Constitution promote or yield the efficacy intended.

Moreover, public participation, as per the Constitution, strives to promote Parliament's oversight role over the executive activities. This is a way for citizens to exercise their constitutional rights to hold the government accountable. Parliamentary committees are obliged to report back to the public and inform them of the effects and results of their inputs. It is a way of combating corruption of government systems and ensuring that the government of the day responds and acts according to the aspirations of the people.

Although the above endeavours have been put to the test, there are still challenges that hamper some of the efforts. Factors that constitute challenges, as mentioned in the literature study section of this document, are caused by the socioeconomic circumstances of the broader South African population and their lack of implementation capacity. The most marginalised in these endeavours are the poor, who are excluded owing to their inaccessibility, time constraints, lack of access to media and their low literacy levels.

Besides the various methods suggested in the preceding paragraphs, various legislative frameworks in the form of statutes have also been promulgated to promote public participation. People are able to participate effectively only if they have enough information. However the ease with which citizens can access information depends on the leadership and the willingness of those wielding political power to make that information accessible to the public because the elite undeniably have the power to influence policy.

3.3 The Regulatory Framework

In order to regulate the housing sector, this also for the benefit of the beneficiaries, the government established the National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC) and the National Urban and Reconstruction Agency (NURCHA). These are the national regulatory bodies created by legislation to administer building projects, including housing, in South Africa.

The role of the National Home Builders Registration Council is to protect housing beneficiaries against shoddy workmanship by providing warranty protection for newly built houses. It further regulates the registration of new builders entering the industry by laying down the technical norms and standards for the construction of houses so that quality can be improved in the consumers' interests. Furthermore, all newly built houses should be registered with NHBRC.

In addition, the National Urban and Reconstruction Agency has been established to provide, among other things, the capacity-building grants to communities to facilitate community development. It is satisfying to see that the government has taken the initiative in creating these bodies so that the beneficiaries, who are vulnerable to poor decisions, are protected by regulations.

3.4 The Housing Act (South Africa, 1997)

Section 14(1) (g) of the Housing Act 1997) states that “[t]he minister is primarily responsible for the development of national housing policy and strategy. This is undertaken through the consultation process facilitated by the Housing: MINMEC structure.”

Furthermore, the subsection states that “...the department does, from time to time, consult on a broad basis on policy and strategy issues and such initiatives normally take the form of consultation workshops and national housing summits”. Fundamentally, the document states that everyone in the state should enjoy full access to all the processes of decision-

making structures. The department is fully obliged to consult as broadly as possible on future housing policies and strategies. However, this is not what prevails on the ground. The above paragraphs show some provinces are committed to fostering relationships between the administration, projects and local communities. The important part played by public participation is clearly stated in Chapter 10 of the Constitution (South Africa, 1996) where it states that “... people’s needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making”. Public participation processes are included in numerous legislations, among others the White Paper on Local Government (South Africa, 1998), Independent Development Plans and the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (South Africa, 1997).

Importantly, sustainable development in South Africa depends on active public participation. Most development processes, however, disregard the importance of public participation and this culminates in causing projects and programmes to fail.

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa, various institutional reforms have been embarked on. The authorities and the people have realised that to expand democracy the local government sphere should be the main role player in its promotion. To this end, the government has encouraged all municipalities to form participatory units. These participatory units have to promote public participation pertaining to budgeting and issues that involve development planning.

3.5 The Municipal Systems Act (South Africa, 2000)

Additionally, the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (South Africa, 2000) stipulates that it aims to “... develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance”. Even though participatory governance has been promoted since the advent of democracy, efforts to actively institutionalise it have moved at a snail’s pace, and the lack of institutionalized participatory governance has led to civil protests in various parts of the country.

In order to advance the intentions of the Municipal Systems Act (South Africa, 2000), it was imperative to form ward committees. The ward committee system was established as a result of the promulgation of the Municipal Systems Act (South Africa, 2000). The Act provides for establishing ward committees in every ward based on the various categories of municipalities. The ward committees have to be representative enough and be comprised of various interest groups within the ward with equitable women representation. The ward committees are given the opportunity to represent their wards and make recommendations on matters that affect the lives of people living in the particular ward.

A ward committee is a communication channel between the community and the local authorities or the council. The ward committee should not only be critical of the local government, but should also mobilise the community to exercise its responsibilities towards the councils. The community's responsibilities, among other things, include payment for services, information on Integrated Development Programmes (IDP) processes, decision-making on the provision of services and the observance of by-laws.

3.6 The White Paper on Local Government (South Africa, 1998)

The White Paper on Local Government (South Africa, 1998) states that "... municipalities should develop mechanisms to ensure citizen participation in policy initiation and formulation, and the monitoring and evaluation of decision-making and implementation". This is usually done by letting residents give views that inform local municipalities' IDPs. The challenge is that the officials do this after they have taken decisions on IDPs. Furthermore, they do not come back to give the residents feedback on final prioritisation.

3.7 The Municipal Structures Act (South Africa, 1998)

Due to some lacunae that existed in the implementation of participatory governance, the Municipal Structures Act (South Africa, 1998) through the Municipal Systems Act (2000) was the one that injected energy into participatory local governance. The former, Municipal Structures Act (South Africa, 1998) tries to detail how to set the local government structures, while the latter (Municipal Systems Act) details how the structures have to be

used. The Municipal Systems Act (2000) states that it aims “... develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance”.

Even though the Constitution (South Africa, 1996) provides for the promotion of participatory governance, the question that has to be asked is whether the ward committees are given a meaningful space to influence decisions. It is of concern that the ward committees are not allowed to influence strategic decision-making, but are reduced to the role of co-coordinators of public meetings. It is on rare occasions that ward committees are engaged on matters pertaining to budgets, strategic decisions on service delivery, planning of development and issues pertaining to performance management.

It has to be acknowledged that ward committees are viable bodies that are able to describe community challenges and identify community needs. Their engagement should not simply be reduced to smaller and less serious activities. Ward committees should not be reduced to a subservient level where they are utilised to carry only the voices of the powerful political elites. They have to be used also to influence important decisions within the council.

Civil society organisations have to be encouraged in South Africa. It is when community members, as groups not individuals, function together that they are able to raise their voices and be heard.

3.8 Summary

Democracy, as a phenomenon that touches people's lives, has to be protected. This has to be achieved through legislative interventions that show the political will. The chapter interrogates frameworks that protect democracy. It has been established in this chapter that South Africa has developed a Constitution (South Africa, 1996) that empowers citizens to take part in decisions that affect their lives. The Constitution is also supported by subsidiary empowering acts like Municipal Systems Act (South Africa, 2000), Municipal Structures Act (South Africa, 1998), The White Paper on Local Government (South Africa, 1998) and other regulations mentioned in the chapter. The next chapter will focus on the research design and method used in this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research design and methodology used for this study. It defines what research design is and further provides an overview on the theory of research and the design applied to the case study. It also highlights the research methodology, sampling and data collection techniques employed during the research. The chapter ends with a discussion of the analysis of the data that was gathered.

4.2 Research design and approach

A research design is a blueprint or a plan. Leedy and Ormrod (2010:85) state that “...the research design provides the overall structure for the procedures the researcher follows, the data the researcher collect and the data analyses the researcher conducts”. This study uses a qualitative design with a mixed approach because the data collected and analysed will be mainly textual of non-empirical and empirical methods as already existing materials like books, pieces of legislation are used. The empirical approach is used by administering a prepared questionnaire. Welman *et al.* (2010:2) states that research involves the gathering of information by means of objective methods and procedures. During the process, knowledge is gained through an examination of what happens. By employing an empirical approach the researcher obtains answers from his or her observations or interviews. In this study face-to face interviews are conducted. These enable the researcher to construct a picture of what happens in the world as opposed to theory and the application of rationalisation.

The design includes textual and to some extent numerical data in its presentation and interpretation. It is suitable for use in a study that employs content analysis during data analysis. An inductive approach is adopted as no theory has to be proved, but the research is based on views derived from other scholars and authors. Mouton (2001:54) and Welman

et al (2010:22) identify various purposes or objectives of social science research, among others, descriptive, explanatory, historical, evaluation, action, experimental, and so on. Welman *et al* (2010:22) state that while the objectives can be exclusive, they can also be used inclusively in some studies. After a study of the various types of objectives, the researcher concluded that in this study it would be preferable to embark on evaluation research to assess the implementation of a government intervention programme. Again, Mouton (2001:158) states that evaluation studies revolve around studying or evaluating whether an intervention strategy that is envisaged is implemented successfully to achieve the desired project outcomes. This is done by visiting the legal frameworks and policies that have to be implemented at local municipalities.

There are two major research approaches, namely qualitative and quantitative. The research problem and the type of data determine which type of the design will be adopted. In qualitative design, the focus is on the respondents with the aim of understanding the phenomenon being studied. Words are used to collect, analyse and interpret results. In the quantitative approach, a representative sample of the population and statistical calculations (numerical) are utilised to analyse and interpret results.

4.3 Research methodology

Research methodology is the description of how respondents are to be sampled and how information is to be gathered. Holloway and Wheeler (1996:175) state that it is important to explicitly state how data was collected. Mouton (2001:56) states that research methodology concentrates on the research process and the tools and procedures to be used. It also covers the sampling techniques and data collection procedures. The section that follows focuses on the sampling techniques and data collection methods used in this study.

4.3.1 Sampling

Brynard and Hanekom (2006:54) define sampling as a process of selecting a manageable group in order to determine the characteristics of a larger group. This is done in the belief that the sampled group will exhibit similar characteristics to the larger group. Sampling

facilitates a study by saving time and costs because in most cases it is not feasible to study a large group. Welman *et al.* (2010:56) distinguish between probability samples and non-probability samples. Probability samples are mainly used in quantitative designs and non-probability samples in qualitative designs.

In this study, non-probability sampling was chosen and purposive sampling preferred. The respondents were hierarchically categorised in terms of the complexity of the information needed. At the lowest rung were the beneficiaries of the houses and at the highest rung were the managers who have expert knowledge on policy. The purposive sampling technique was also preferred because it eliminates people who are not associated with the project as they would not have the necessary information to answer the questionnaire.

4.3.2 Data collection methods

Mouton (2001:104) states that data can be collected through a variety of data collection methods such as observation, interviewing and analysing texts. However, the method selected should correlate with the data source. In this study, two broad forms of data were collected, namely primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected by means of face-to-face interviews using a semi-structured questionnaire, while the secondary data was collected by means of document review as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

4.3.2.1 Secondary data

The secondary data was sourced from newspapers, government gazettes, journals, articles and books and is organised and presented in Chapters 2 and 3. Legislative frameworks relevant to South Africa were consulted and presented to complete Chapter 3.

4.3.2.2 Primary data

Face-to-face interviews were developed to gather primary data. These interviews helped to establish a rapport between the interviewer and the interviewees when retrieving information from respondents. A semi-structured questionnaire was administered in order to gain individual viewpoints which were accompanied by emotions or feelings and thoughts.

The researcher interviewed 45 beneficiaries of the project, one community liaison officer (CLO), one ward councillor, one director of corporate services in the local municipality and one senior manager in the provincial Department of Human Settlement. The researcher made appointments with all 49 respondents. The study had a 100% response rate as all targeted respondents were interviewed.

It should be noted that this section is in line with section 4.3.1 of this document. In that section it is mentioned that the researcher opted for purposive sampling. This is because the researcher wanted to use the “key informant technique” where experts in policy matters are the respondents in the research. In this instance, these were the senior officials situated at various selected points both at the local municipal level and in the provincial department offices. One director from the local municipality, as the highest authority in the department, was interviewed. One senior manager in the provincial department, as the person with expert knowledge on policy, was interviewed. These two interviewees also played an oversight role in the housing project on which this study focuses. Only one CLO was interviewed as the researcher was informed by the officials that there was only one CLO owing to the limited budget available for this project. The researcher also interviewed one ward councillor as he was the liaison person between the municipality and the beneficiaries, and as such had both information pertaining to the beneficiaries and knowledge about the processes followed in the project.

Furthermore, a judgmental selection on who should be the respondents was made. Most literature recommends a ten percent sample of the population. In this study 49 respondents were interviewed, which was thought to be enough, as that made up more than the suggested ten percent of the 300 beneficiaries as indicated by the municipality housing list.

4.3.2.3 Research limitations

The data collection process encountered several difficulties because this study was done in a rural area. Sometimes the interviewees were skeptical about giving information freely,

and government officials were also often reluctant to give information. They usually wanted to ensure that the researcher was not an investigator. Furthermore, it took the researcher a long time to conduct the interviews and transcribe the data.

However, the data collection stage was found to be very interesting as the interviewees came up with interesting information. Among the officials there were some who participated willingly, like Mr. Peter Lawrence. They even made suggestions regarding how the study could be carried out and also requested that they be sent the final report as it might help them by suggesting improved ways of enhancing public participation.

As is customary in the case study method, a method relevant for this study, the researcher started by identifying concepts and then established relationships between the concepts and finally created themes. The themes were coded to reduce large amounts of information into manageable data. The section that follows illustrates the analytical procedure that the study is based on.

The discussion that follows concentrates on the development of categories, themes and the participants' evolving stories and how patterns were formulated.

4.4 Data analysis

According to Glaser and Strauss (in Lincoln and Guba 1985:339) there are four steps in the development of categories, themes and patterns, namely information collecting, note taking, coding and making memos. These steps were followed in this study. The researcher observed the participants' behaviour with great care. During the observation period, information was collected and notes taken during both formal and informal interviewing. When information was collected, it was coded into categories by using the broader concepts that emerged from the participants' answers in order to conceptualise the underlying meaning of each statement. The themes used coincided with those uncovered during the literature study when the researcher consulted various sources to gain an understanding of the nature of public participation and the elements used to define the concept of public participation. Using these themes to formulate the questions meant the researcher was able to ascertain whether the public participation process, what it entails

and how it is defined in the literature was well understood in its entirety with no element being left out. Topics or codes were developed, for example:

| THEMES | | CODES |
|---------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Community participation | Ci |
| 2. | Decision-making | Dm |
| 3. | Communication | Com |
| 4. | Participation in the project | Pitp |
| 5. | Formation of committees | Foc |
| 6. | Local Economic Development purpose | LEDp |

Each respondent was given a questionnaire comprised of topics covering the above six concepts. Questions that were similar were clustered together into categories to form major topic themes. Then the researcher collected the information in its raw form from various questionnaires and developed codes on the side of each theme of the transcribed text. This was done by identifying a descriptive word and its frequency in each question in order to develop further themes. Data that seemed to belong to a particular category was then grouped under one theme. This was done in order to build a story from the themes and codes, hence the selection of qualitative (textual) research, and not quantitative research.

The part of the chapter that follows is based on data analysis subdivided into the themes developed during information gathering. These themes were developed to address the objectives mentioned in Chapter 1, and identified in terms of the role they could play in achieving the research objectives. The relationship between the themes identified and the research objectives are as follows:

1. Theme one: Community participation in meetings

Objective one: Describe what public participation is.

Objective two: Provide literature related to conceptual and contextual understanding of various theoretical perspectives, roles, motivations and determinants of public participation in relation to national frameworks.

2. Theme two: Decision-making

Objective two: Provide literature related to conceptual and contextual understanding of various theoretical perspectives, roles, motivations and determinants of public participation in relation to national frameworks.

3. Theme three: Communication

Objective four: Explore RDP housing policies and legislative guidelines on how public participation is practised.

4. Theme four: Participation in the project

Objective three: Provide an overview of public participation in relation to local government, focusing on policy and statutory provisions.

5. Theme five: Formation of committee

Objective four: Explore RDP housing policies and legislative guidelines on how public participation is practised.

Objective three: Provide an overview of public participation in relation to local government, focusing on policy and statutory provisions.

6. Theme six: LED purposes

Objective four: Explore RDP housing policies and legislative guidelines on how public participation is practised.

In chapter 2, during the literature review, the elements of public participation were identified, namely community involvement, decision-making, communication, beneficiaries' participation in the project, committee formations and community benefit. Formulating the questionnaire using themes helps to assess whether public participation was authentic and efficient. The next chapter of this study focuses on data analysis.

4.5 Summary

Chapter 4 focuses on how the study was conducted. The main aim was to understand why the particular research design and approach was chosen and why the research methodology was appropriate for achieving the research objectives. The ensuing discussion included describing the sampling procedure and data collection methods. The chapter also gives information on how the primary data was collected.

From chapter 2, it can be deduced that a researcher has to choose appropriate research methods depending on the type of data to be collected, how data is analysed and presented. It has been found that scientific research is not an abrupt activity that can be approached intuitively. There has to be a thought out plan that is systematic. In addition, the researcher has to be aware of potential limitations that can affect the study and has to plan how to overcome those limitations. By employing the selected research methodology, the researcher arrived at the research findings that are discussed in detail in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to present the data and the findings based on the data. The presentation is done in descriptive and narrative forms. The description is relevant for addressing the factors that contribute to the low levels of public participation in the RDP housing project, which is the main objective of the study. A contextual background of the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality is presented to illustrate how public participation is practiced in the provision of low-cost housing. The findings are presented according to the themes developed during the study, which are integrated with the literature study. The themes were developed to address the stated objectives in Chapter 1 and helped to formulate a questionnaire. The questionnaire is presented in the annexure.

5.2 Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality

The Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality was established under section 12 of the Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 1998). In terms of its mandate, like any other municipality in South Africa, it has to identify poor households, or the so-called indigents, who cannot build houses for themselves. When carrying out the mandate to provide low-cost housing, the municipality has to let the beneficiaries of the housing projects participate in all the project's activities, from initiation to completion stages. The premise of this study is that public participation is not well practised in this municipality, as per the information given in Chapter 4, hence the dissatisfaction shown by the beneficiaries by staging a protest and their being reluctant to occupy the houses. The following section will deal with the data analysis and the key findings of the study.

5.3 Findings

The findings are discussed under the themes previously developed.

5.3.1 Demographic information

The study concentrated only on the beneficiaries. There were 45 respondents, consisting of ten males and 35 females. Of the ten males, four had matric, three had passed Grade 9 and three Grade 7. Four worked in a retail store and earned less than R3000 month. Six worked at informal jobs earning less than R1000 a month.

Of the 35 females, nine had passed matric, 15 Grade 10, seven Grade 7 and four had not reached Grade 7. Statistically, 75% of the sample did not have matric. Ten worked in a retail store earning less than R3000 a month, 15 worked as domestic workers earning less than R1500 a month and ten were working informally by creating their own jobs which earned them less than R1000 per month.

From this information it was established that most of the beneficiaries were people with a low education level. It is true that education largely determines an individual's social status and many of the root causes of poverty are associated with low levels of education. Most people who are unemployed are those with little formal education and this category of the population cannot meet their basic social needs, including building own houses. When one takes gender into account, the majority of owners of RDP houses are single unemployed women. This means that poor, unemployed women have to be included in public participation processes.

5.3.2 Theme one: Beneficiary participation (in meetings)

Objective one: Describe what public participation is.

Objective two: Provide literature related to the conceptual and contextual understanding of various theoretical perspectives, roles, motivations and determinants of public participation in relation to national frameworks.

To describe public participation as a variable in a research study, one has to embark on a literature study and look at how other scholars have described the concept. From the literature study, it was found that public participation is described in different forms by different scholars and in various forms in various legal frameworks. However, the documents do agree on basic elements such as active involvement, meaningfulness, development, decision-making by beneficiaries, communication, and so on. These elements do resonate with the first theme (and its two objectives) because beneficiary involvement is a key element in describing meaningful and effective public participation.

The respondents were asked whether they were involved in the project from the planning stage to the completion stage. They were also asked whether they were always updated on all project activities and encouraged to play a role. Out of 49 respondents, two respondents (4%) answered “yes” and 47 respondents (96%) answered “no”.

Involvement means physically and mentally expending energy through actions from the initiation to the completion of the project. The responses, as indicated in Figure 1, show that there was no real involvement of beneficiaries in the project. This bears out the views discussed earlier in this study: denying beneficiaries active involvement in activities that directly affect them, leads to project failure. In the project under scrutiny, this element of public participation was overlooked. The majority (96%) of the intended beneficiaries responded “no” to this question.

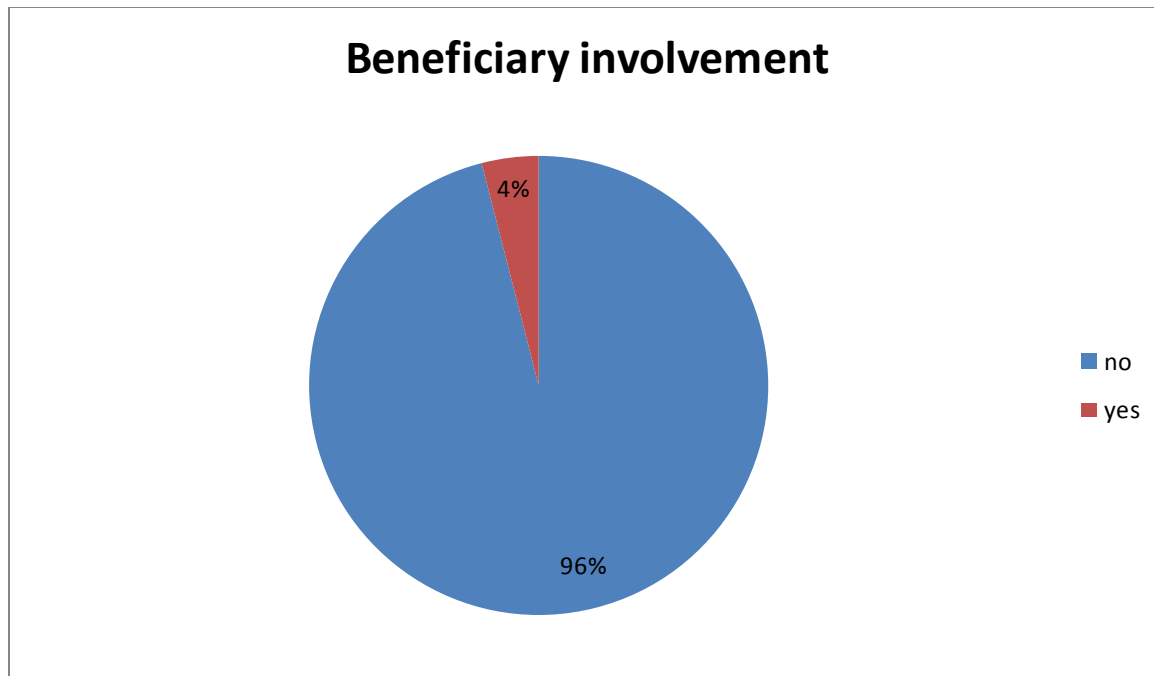


Figure 1: Beneficiary involvement

Source: By author, 2013

5.3.3 Theme two: Decision-making

Objective two: Provide literature related to the conceptual and contextual understanding of various theoretical perspectives, roles, motivations and determinants of public participation in relation to national frameworks. Decision-making is among the elements mentioned in the descriptions of public participation. The literature that deals with public participation demands that the beneficiaries of a project have to make decisions about projects and as well as influence the final decisions. This is stated in all national frameworks. The beneficiaries have to play a role and the facilitators of the public participation process have to provide a motivating environment for the beneficiaries to be actively involved in taking these decisions.

The respondents were asked whether they initiated decisions during meetings and whether their decisions were considered by the officials. If they answered “yes”, they were asked if those decisions influenced the subsequent activities in the project cycle. They were also asked whether they had decided on the location, the design or structure of the houses.

Of 49 respondents, two (4%) responded “yes” and 47 (96%) responded “no”.

That was not the case as the high percentage of respondents who responded negatively to questions under the theme on decision-making shows. The municipality seems to have practised top-down decision-making strategies. That is simply the imposition of decisions on the community, a practice that has to be discouraged.

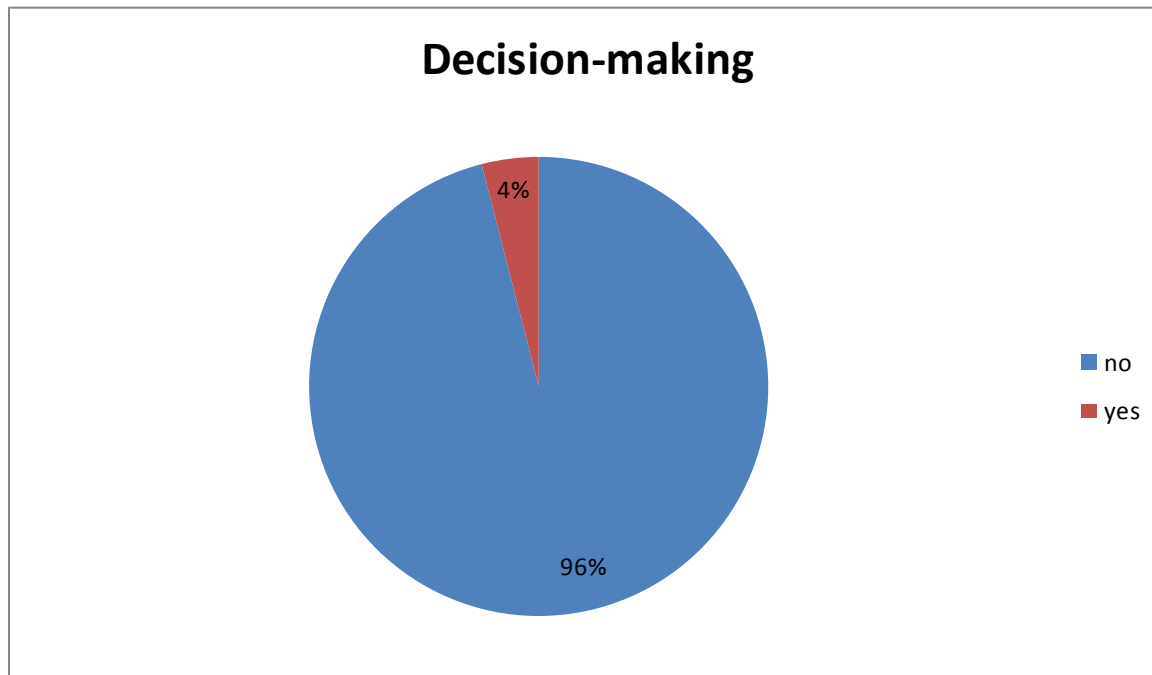


Figure 2: Decision-making

Source: By author, 2013

5.3.4 Theme three: Communication

Objective four: Explore RDP housing policies and legislative guidelines on how public participation is practiced.

The theme and the objective focus on whether communication as an element of public participation was prioritised as a matter of policy and in accordance with the legislative guidelines. For public communication to be effective there has to be open communication between the facilitators of the process and beneficiaries. The RDP housing policies and the legislative frameworks contain guidelines on how the objectives of public participation can

be communicated. Beneficiaries must be able to express their views and must be updated on the progress as well as be able to say how they feel about the project. To establish effective communication, housing facilitators have to acquaint themselves with communication techniques they can employ to promote effective communication.

The respondents were asked whether there were meetings between the officials and beneficiaries. If they answered “yes”, they were asked who initiated and attended the meetings and whether they were allowed to give inputs and whether their inputs were considered. Out of 49 respondents, 46 (94%) responded “no” and three respondents (6%) responded “yes”.

Communication is a conduit through which people express their thoughts. Thoughts are expressed during meetings and meetings should take place throughout the entire process of the project (Gwala and Theron, 2011). In this project, there is no evidence to show that there was communication between stakeholders as there is no evidence of minutes having been taken at any meetings. Any formal activity without the formal documentation of minutes implies that the activity never took place. The negative responses 94 % “no” indicate that the municipality lacks communication strategies between its officials and the community.

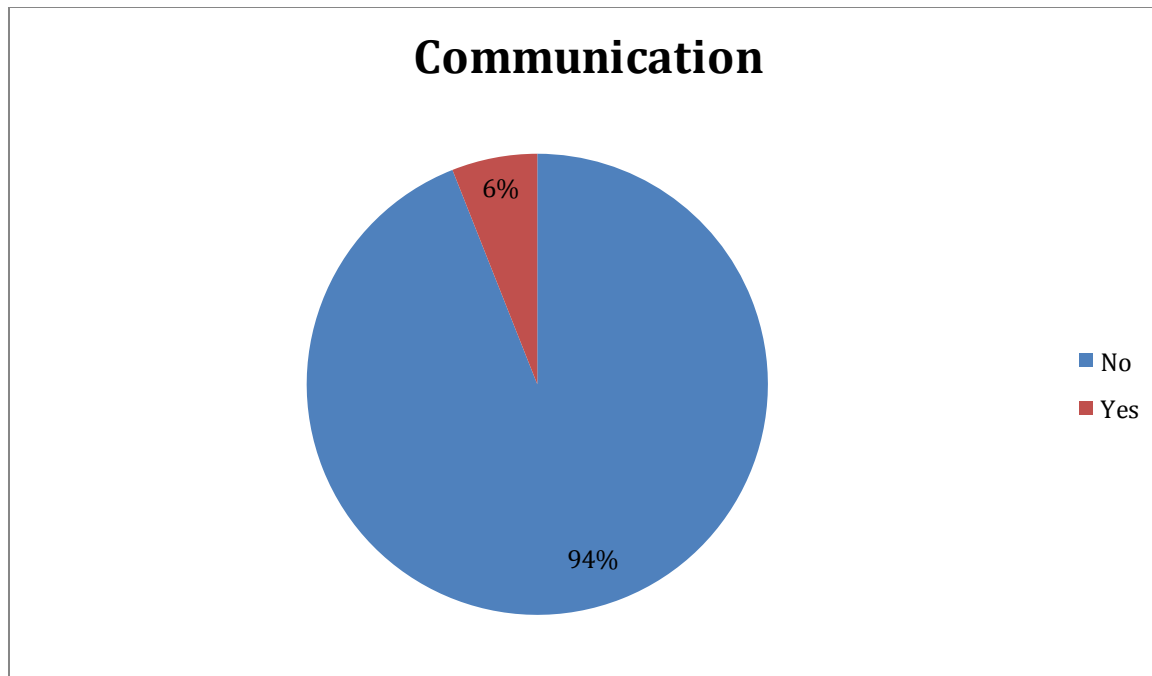


Figure 3: Communication

Source: By author, 2013

5.3.5 Theme four: Beneficiaries' involvement (in building of houses)

Objective three: Provide an overview of public participation in relation to local government, focusing on policy and statutory provisions. The theme focuses on whether the beneficiaries were actively involved (physically and mentally) in the actual building of the houses. Active participation is promoted in local government policies and statutory provisions. The objective of the theme was to ascertain whether policies and legal stipulations that promote beneficiary participation were truly adhered to. The respondents were asked whether they were physically involved in the building of the houses. If they answered "yes", they were asked if they were they given the opportunity to contribute ideas or whether they were passive laborers without making any contribution to how the job could be carried out. Out of 49 respondents, four respondents (8%) answered "yes" and 45 respondents (92%) said "no".

From the responses of those interviewed, especially the beneficiaries (92%), it is obvious that none of the many possible public participation strategies were employed during the

Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality low-cost housing project. The high percentage of negative responses can be attributed to the fact that the officials mistakenly saw the beneficiaries as passive recipients who would automatically be excited simply to accept the project. This is an incorrect perception as the beneficiaries must be the first benefactors of projects to benefit from their self-empowerment.

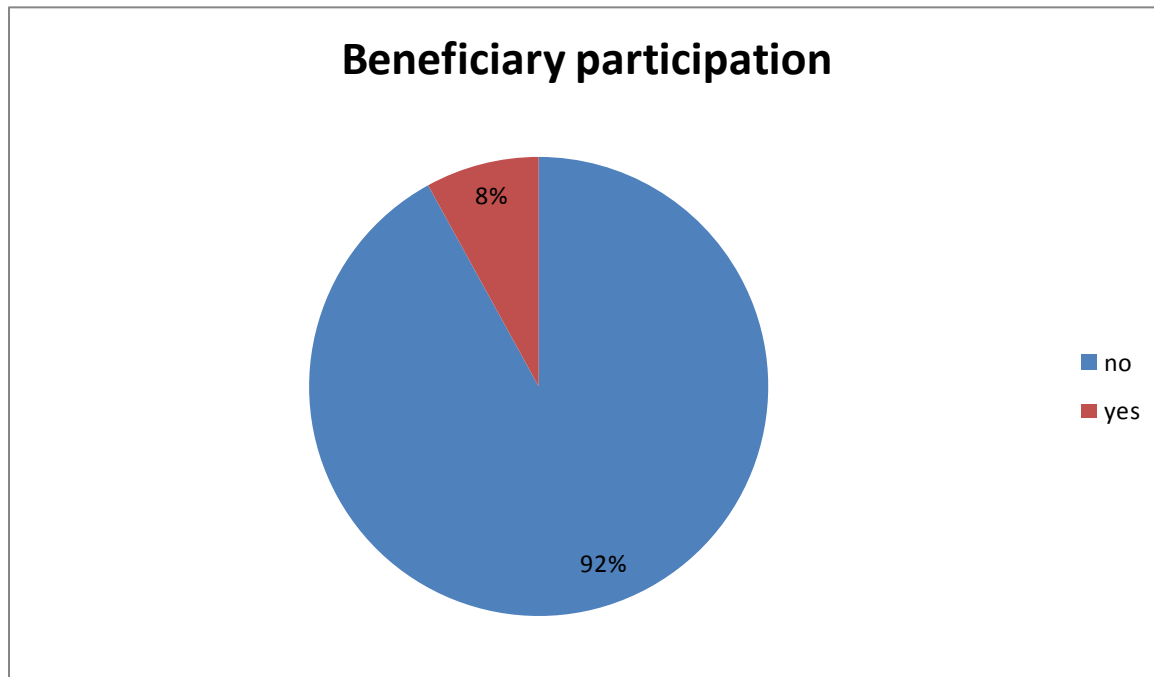


Figure 4: Beneficiary participation

Source: By author, 2013

5.3.6 Theme five: Formation of committee

Objective four: Explore RDP housing policies and legislative guidelines on how public participation is practised.

Objective three: Provide an overview of public participation in relation to local government, focusing on policy and statutory provisions.

The legislative guidelines and policies provide an overview of how public participation can be promoted by establishing committees that represent the local people in projects. Committees are important as it is not always possible to communicate with all stakeholders at all times owing to time constraints. Committees help to build a link between the project

facilitators and the beneficiaries. In the literature study it was found that communication forms one of the most important elements of effective public participation and the need to communicate is stressed in almost all policies promoting public participation. To make communication easier, the formation of committees is encouraged.

Respondents were asked whether there was a committee. If they answered “yes”, they were asked who the members of the committee were, how they were elected and what role they played. Out of 49 respondents, three (6%) answered “yes” and 46 respondents (94%) answered “no”.

From the responses given (the overwhelming percentage of respondents who responded “no” to the question on the formation of a committee), it is clear that the municipality did not try to form a housing committee. It was revealed that the CLO was selected by the councillor on grounds known only to him. This was an imposition. The stakeholders should have been given the opportunity to reach consensus on who should have been the liaison officer. The process of choosing the CLO was flawed.

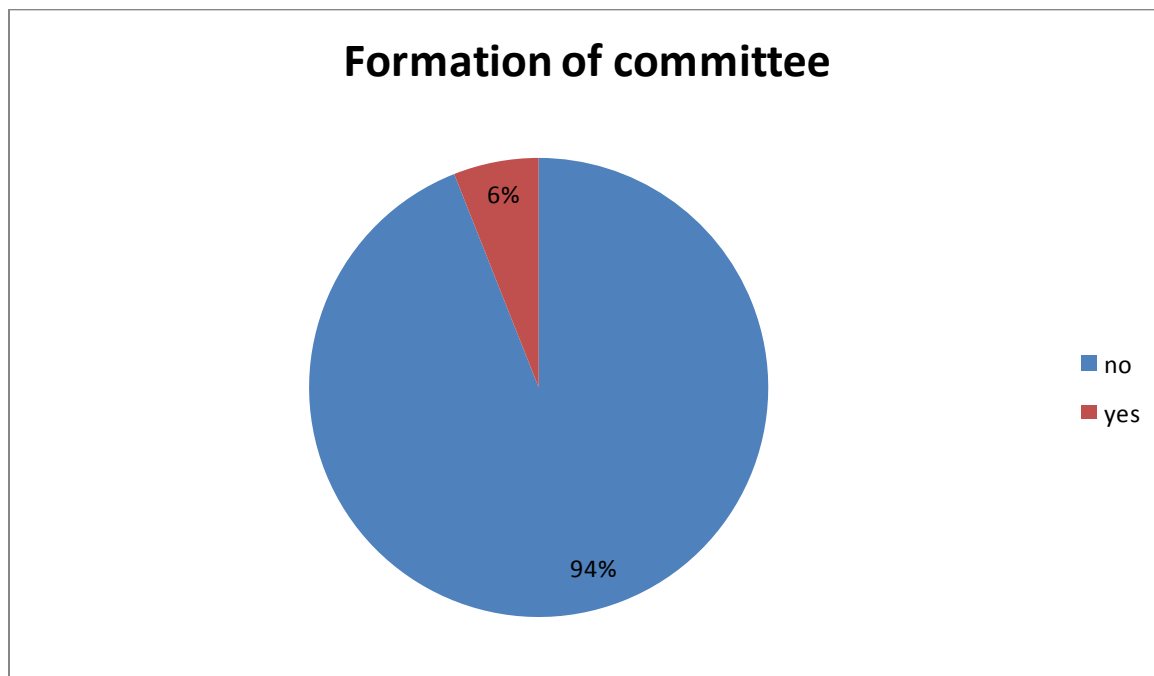


Figure 5: Formation of committee

Source: By author, 2013

5.3.7 Theme six: Local Economic Development purpose

Objective four: Explore RDP housing policies and legislative guidelines on how public participation is practised.

Local government policies promote local economic development, and social or community projects are expected to promote the economic status of the local community. Furthermore, municipalities should develop projects that alleviate, if not eradicate, poverty. This theme sought to ascertain whether the local community, more especially the intended beneficiaries, benefited economically from the housing project.

The respondents were asked whether they got jobs from the project. If their answer was “yes”, they were then asked if they were trained in any way. They were also asked whether local business played any part in the supplying of building materials. Finally they were asked whether they felt empowered by the time the project was completed. All 45 beneficiaries (100%) stated that they derived no economic benefits from the project.

The responses of the intended beneficiaries indicated that the local people never benefited from the project. One of the supposed advantages of community projects is to boost the local economy by means of local employment and the buying of local goods during project development. It is clear that local employment and the utilisation of local goods in the project were not prioritised. This is also evident from the problem statement in chapter 1 where it is mentioned that the contractor brought in his own labour. Therefore, the project failed the community in terms of project beneficiation. All the intended beneficiaries (100%) responded that they never benefited from the project.

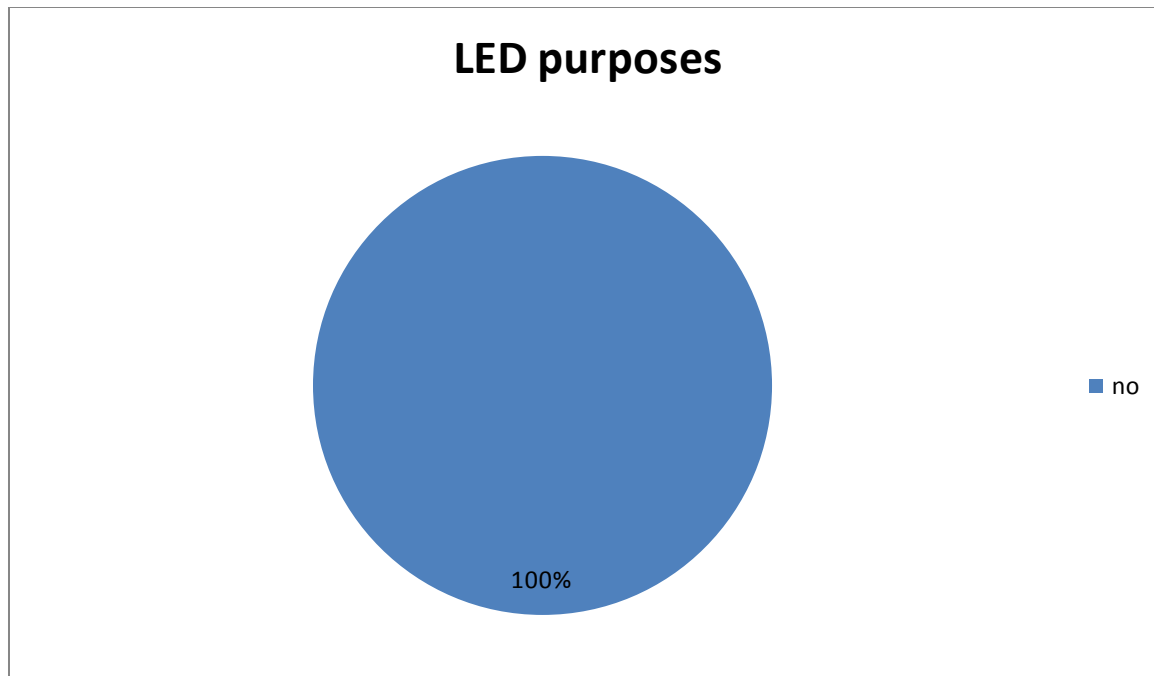


Figure 6: LED purposes

Source: By author, 2013

5.4 Summary

When evaluating the data from Chapter 5 in terms of the responses to the questionnaire, it becomes evident that public participation in the low-cost housing in the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality was not given priority. In the problem statement, it is stated that the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality built the houses without embarking on a public participation process. The houses were built with no beneficiaries' inputs and the immediate resources like employing the beneficiaries in the project were not utilised. From the data collected in this chapter, the following was revealed:

- RDP houses are needed by people who cannot afford to build themselves decent houses, which mostly earn little or no salary owing to unemployment, and are mostly women with little education.
- The beneficiaries in the RDP housing project were not involved in all the stages of the project. Officials did not take steps to encourage beneficiary involvement.

- Communication between the beneficiaries and officials was not effective. There is no evidence of any formal communication.
- No committee was ever established, as is advocated by policy guidelines.
- Beneficiaries were not physically involved in the building of their houses.
- The project did not achieve any economic development goals as anticipated.
- South Africa is still in a developmental stage economically. To develop its citizens, South Africa has to close all social backlogs created by social inequalities by at least providing social relief to the poor who cannot afford to provide themselves with basic services. One way of accomplishing developmental goals is by providing low-cost houses to poor people.

However this has to be done by acknowledging that development takes place around people. Gergis (1999:3) stated: “[D]evelopment must be woven around people, not people around development and it should empower individuals and groups.”

The accomplishment of community projects is embedded in the development of relationships between people. These relationships have to be nurtured through the promotion of public participation in order to achieve the envisaged project results. Public participation strategies are important for promoting cordial relationships between officials and community members. For public participation to be authentic it has to include elements like communication, participation, benefits to beneficiaries, and so on.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

One of the socio-economic challenges facing South Africa is the unavailability and non-affordability of houses. In one of the programmes aimed at addressing the shortage of housing, the government introduced a low-cost housing programme as an intervention effort to build houses for citizens who cannot afford to build houses for themselves. To facilitate the programme, the government developed a number of legal frameworks to ensure that the programme would be efficiently implemented. Such legal frameworks were put in place to support the government's efforts and vision of providing basic services through public participation. In Chapter 3 of this study, the researcher details why the legal framework is important in the provision of low-cost houses. The literature also presents the inclusive elements of public participation and guidelines that can be followed to facilitate successful low-cost housing programmes. The following section presents the conclusion of the study in line with its objectives.

6.2 Conclusion

Objective one: Describe what public participation is.

In Chapter 1, one of the stated objectives was to come to an understanding of what public participation is. This was done by referring to the views of various authors on the concept. In aggregating their views, common elements were identified, namely the importance of beneficiary benefits, active participation, communication, meaningful decision-making, influence on outcomes, and so on. The study revealed that, amongst other things, there was no real participation of beneficiaries or any of the other desirable elements in the project studied. One of the main elements of public participation is for the beneficiaries to be involved in decision-making processes in projects that impact on them. The majority of the beneficiaries in this project neither physically nor mentally participated in the project.

Objective two: Provide literature related to the conceptual and contextual understanding of various theoretical perspectives, roles, motivations and determinants of public participation in national frameworks.

There are various legal stipulations on national levels as dealt with in Chapter 3 (legal and policy framework). The legal frameworks on all three levels emphasise decision making as a component of public participation, amongst others. The beneficiaries were supposed to have played a role in informing decisions and influencing them. The study showed that decisions were taken by officials on behalf of the beneficiaries, which amounted to decision imposition.

Objective three: Provide an overview of public participation in relation to local government, focusing on policy and statutory provisions.

The policy and statutory provisions emphasise the value of communication. The study revealed that there were no clear communication lines. Communication is a two-way process, in this instance between the beneficiaries and the government representatives. Furthermore, the study showed that the alleged meetings with officials were not formalised, as is evident from the lack of concrete minutes that could have witnessed to the holding of formal meetings. In addition, chapter 2 (literature study) details various legal stipulations derived from the Constitution (South Africa, 1996). These stipulations obligate municipalities to adhere to the constitutional provisions that promote public participation. From the findings it is clear that this municipality did not promote these constitutional provisions.

Objective four: Explore RDP housing policies and legislative guidelines on how public participation is practised.

The government laid down policies to guide officials on public participation. The study showed that these guidelines are on paper but that no initiatives were taken to implement them in the project under study. Furthermore, one of the prerequisites for project initiation and implementation is the formation of a project committee. The beneficiaries held that no committee was formed. If a committee does not exist then the implication is that there

were no clear communication lines and therefore no formal meetings where formal minutes could be taken.

In addition, one of the objectives of a development project is to improve the socioeconomic conditions of the local citizens by utilising local labour and drawing resources from local business. The study showed that both the local unemployed and business did not benefit economically from the project.

Objective five: Provide a synthesis pertaining to the insights that have been gathered from the study by offering proposals and recommendations that would further implementation of citizens' decisions in the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality.

This objective is realised below in the recommendations.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the key findings, the following are recommended:

6.3.1. The Limpopo Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs has to consider public participation as a priority and allocate resources for the realisation of the objectives of public involvement in developmental projects. Furthermore, the premier's office has to streamline the implementation of the public participation process, allocate resources and monitor the implementation of the process. In the province, public participation is not budgeted for. There is no planning for public participation and, therefore, public participation is not given priority during budgeting.

6.3.2. The Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality has to establish a public participation unit that will be particularly responsible to oversee that public participation is given priority in the whole municipality. This local municipality ignores the importance of public participation just like the provincial Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs. There is no designated staff to promote public participation in the local municipality.

6.3.3. The provincial Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs has to arrange workshops for officials and all relevant stakeholders in low-cost housing in order to acquaint them with requisite skills to implement public participation. If further resources can be sought, a unit has to be established to co-ordinate participation in the municipality.

6.3.4. Various public participation strategies are available to enhance public participation with stakeholders. These are the radio, local newspapers, general announcements, asking indunas and chiefs to convey messages, announcements through local schools, pamphlets, and so on. None of the above methods was used to communicate with the citizens. Gwala (2011:153) states that there has to be an “appropriate mix” of strategies that can be implemented when planning community meetings. The strategies may include flyers, local newspaper advertisements that call for public participation; local radio shows where participation facilitator is interviewed about a community project, face-to-face interviews that are randomly compiled, etc. unfortunately, the municipality uses radio announcements in Sepedi language only.

6.3.5. A major problem is that of political bias. It was found that officials who belong to a particular political party select along party lines when opportunities arise. The CLO allegedly belonged to the same political party as the ward councilor and the officials who selected him. This constitutes selective dissemination of information within the municipality.

6.3.6. Facilitators have to discontinue viewing public participation as a “monster” that exposes them as incompetent employees. The municipality must welcome participatory processes as conduits towards enhancing democratic values. Most officials have the fear that beneficiaries will embarrass them in public.

6.3.7. The Elias Motswaledi officials have to construct a participatory model that is relevant to local municipality. The model has to be based on principles that underlie authentic public participation as mentioned in chapter 2 (literature study).

6.3.8. When officials plan, they have to do planning with the project beneficiaries. The challenge in this regard is reflected on chapter two (problem statement). The community in Elias Motswaledi never participated in project planning, from its initiation and completion stages. This denied the beneficiaries their fundamental right to influence and direct the project.

6.3.9. The participation facilitators have to, from time to time, consistently assess the impact of their strategies. In assessing the impact of the strategies, the officials will be able to track which strategies yield best results.

6.3.10. Finally, as it has been identified that the officials use radio to invite the public to community meetings, a recommendation is that:

- The day that is chosen for the meeting be convenient for potential attendees.
- The time should suit all potential participants.
- The agenda to be dispatched to the public in time.
- Facilitators have to be early at the venues.
- Facilitators to be prepared for the meeting.
- Facilitators to make sure that there is progress by avoiding the repetition of issues on the agendas.
- Facilitators, when there is a need to postpone community meetings due to unforeseen reasons, to communicate the postponement in time and tell specify the newly set date.
- Facilitators to stop calling community meetings only towards elections. This brings distrust in the community and builds the notion that they are used for political gains.
- The officials have to consider IAP2 Toolbox Strategies and other strategies when developing context relevant public participation strategies.
- In order to establish municipal-beneficiary relationship, the spirit of Bathe Pele principles has to be embraced. This municipal-beneficiary relationship should always be prioritised in all projects.

6.4 Recommendations for further investigation

This study was an investigation on a small scale into one aspect of the workings of the Elias Motswaledi Local Municipality. It is therefore impossible to generalise the findings of the study. Thus, it is recommended that subsequent studies be done on a larger scale so that the results can be used more generally. Such studies would provide the national Department of Human Settlement with a better picture of how public participation is practised in the provision of low-cost housing. Furthermore, studies have to be done on how public participation can be more effectively streamlined and resources enlisted and channeled towards reviving public participation as the cornerstone of democracy.

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Annexure 1: Interview Schedule

1. DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS
 - 1.1. DATE:
 - 1.2. PLACE:
 - 1.3. NAME OF PROJECT
 - 1.4. PARTICIPANT'S PORTFOLIO;
 - 1.5. PARTICIPANT'S EDUCATION EDUCATION STANDARD:
2. PROJECT HISTORY.
 - 2.1. Can you tell more about how the project started?

SUBQUESTIONS

- 2.1.1. Describe how the project started.
- 2.1.2. How did you involve yourself?
- 2.1.3. How do you feel about the project?
- 2.1.4. What was the community's response to the project?
3. PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSE TO THE PROJECT.

TELL OF YOUR GENERAL FEELINGS TO THE PROJECT.

SUBQUESTIONS

- 3.1. Do you like the houses?
- 3.2. If you do not like the houses, tell why.
4. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT AND STAKEHOLDERS.

TELL HOW COMMUNICATION WAS MAINTAINED.

SUBQUESTIONS

- 4.1 Were there meetings between officials and community?
- 4.2 Who initiated the meetings?
- 4.3 Who attended the meetings?
- 4.4 Were you allowed to give inputs?
- 4.5 Were your inputs considered?

5 IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS.

TELL HOW DECISIONS WERE IMPLEMENTED.

SUBQUESTIONS

- 5.1 Are satisfied about your influencing the decisions?
- 5.2 Were you always invited when decisions were taken or changed?
- 5.3 Were your decisions not overruled by those of the officials?

6 COMMITTEE FORMATION.

TELL HOW THE COMMITTEE WAS FORMED.

SUBQUESTIONS.

- 6.1 Was there a committee?
- 6.2 Who were the members of the committee?
- 6.3 How was the committee elected?
- 6.4 What role did the committee play in the project?

7 LED PURPOSES.

TELL HOW YOU BENEFITED FROM THE PROJECT.

SUBQUESTIONS.

- 7.1 Did you get a job from the project?
- 7.2 Did you get training to develop skills?
- 7.3 Were the local business people taking part?
- 7.4 After the completion of the houses, do you feel empowered?